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THE SELF AS THEME IN GROVE'S NOVELS

BY

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled The Self as Theme in Grove's Novels, submitted by Eugenie Louise Myles in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

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INTRODUCTION: "WORLDS WITHIN THE WORLD"

According to the Canadian novelist Frederick Philip Grove, probably the only unexplored and undiscovered continents of this universe are to be found in the human heart and soul. These are the "worlds within the world" that men discover when they listen "into themselves." In this thesis I shall attempt to show that this search for, and examination of, the central core of man's being, the human personality, is the chief concern of Grove in his major writings. For want of a better and more explicit term, I shall refer to this central core as the self; inadequate as this term may be, it has at least the sanction of so distinguished a writer as Matthew Arnold in that poem of his in which he makes a poignant and often fruitless search into the hidden personality of man and which he entitled "The Buried Life."

In his writer's concern for the self, Grove is by no means alone on this continent. Tracing the development of the novel in America, Leslie Fiedler argues that its subject "is the human heart, which is to say, the psyche in all its complexities and dark self deceits" (Love and Death in the American Novel, 84). In Canada where, as in the United States, the shallow historical romance has long been a favored genre, writers of fiction are turning from concern with the physical and outward features of "the unknown country" to a greater concern with man's self and soul, the inmost world of its inhabitants. For instance, Callaghan, in making the spiritual side of man his particular study, has tried to show that "man ... exists

not merely physically; he has a spiritual existence through knowledge and through love."¹ MacLennan has attempted to assess the Canadian spirit as revealed in a number of key situations; in the introduction to Barometer Rising, for example, Hugo McPherson sees him, with something of the objective of Joyce, pressing boldly "into the unknown country of the nation's consciousness" (Barometer Rising, ix). Mitchell, in Who Has Seen the Wind, has portrayed the development of a boy's mind and spirit as set against a background of western Canadian village and prairie; in a similar setting Sinclair Ross has followed a period of psychological conflict between a man and a woman, attempting, "among other things, an exposition of the Puritan conscience" (As For Me and My House, vii).

Here also in the west, Frederick Philip Grove, the writer who is said to have influenced Ross², has consistently shown in his books that preoccupation with the self is his major concern. For him the unknown country is this self; repeatedly he has urged Canadians to look inward at this country:

They [Canadians] are supposed to be born explorers; but they have not yet heard that the human heart and soul are perhaps the only corners in this universe where unexplored and undiscovered continents are still abounding. (UTQ, VII, 460)

What we need is dreamers who will stop and listen into themselves ... who will go into the wilderness to discover new continents, not in any unexplored or undiscovered ocean, but in the human heart and soul. I have a haunting suspicion that this is the only corner left in this world where undiscovered continents are still abounding. Let us find worlds within the world to which we have not yet reacted. (It Needs to Be Said, 114)

Like the contemporary American novelist James Baldwin, Grove believes that the writer's work must be forged out of the experiences,

out of the searching, of himself; a writer's concern "is everlastingly with his soul" (In Search of Myself, 155). For anything "to become a fit subject matter for art, it must be reborn in the soul of the artist." But this is not to say that Grove believes that "the creative spirit" should appear in the first person; on the contrary, we shall see that he feels that the artist must become a kind of world consciousness, mirroring "a more or less universal human reaction to what is not I" (It Needs to Be Said, 60, 63).

This search for and of the self reveals Grove as belonging both to the nineteenth and to the twentieth centuries. During his youth those two writers with whom he has a special affinity, Joseph Conrad and Thomas Hardy, were concerning themselves increasingly with man's soul in terms of symbolic environment; by the close of the nineteenth century Grove, too, was writing of man and his reactions to environment in the new western world. Presently the studies of such men as Freud and Jung illuminated findings in the literary field; by the nineteen twenties, when T. S. Eliot was depicting the hollow men and the decay of the human "house," Grove also was searching, in such essays as Over Prairie Trails, for the core of man, and writing novels that treat of the disintegration of the "house" of man's being.

While Grove's themes, then, possess a contemporary relevance, his fictional methods tend to link him with such writers as Conrad and Hardy. Like Conrad, whose works he read and admired³, he was a European cosmopolitan who had knocked about the world and who had deliberately chosen to write in English, a tongue not his own; like Hardy, he elected to write of man in a largely rural environment; of

Egdon heath he has said that it is one of the enduring landscapes of all art and we may wonder if, in Over Prairie Trails, he is attempting to portray a kind of Egdon heath in the Manitoba bush country⁴. But it is particularly in the matter of method that the relationship is closest; Grove's books, like Hardy's and Conrad's, raise the question as to whether, in this matter of progressive revelation of the self, we are confronted by realistic novel or romance, and especially, gothic romance.

True, more than once Grove himself has observed that romanticism is "a thing I abhorred"; critics point frequently to the "stark realism" of much of his work. Yet his chief critic, Desmond Pacey, more than once accuses him of melodrama and of mixing realism and romance. It is impossible, says Pacey in commenting on the novel The Yoke of Life, "successfully to graft a romantic superstructure upon a realistic base." He continues:

Suddenly the whole atmosphere changes; from an ordinary young pioneer lad eager for an education, Len is suddenly transformed into a wild Shelleyan or Byronic hero; from the real and tangible world of a pioneer district we are whisked to a strange unearthly lake which might have graced the pages of a novel by Mrs. Radcliffe or Monk Lewis. (Frederick Philip Grove, 62)

In Grove's development of the theme of the self, therefore, this matter of method, of romance versus realism, is a point of major concern. Among literary critics of course, this matter of making distinctions between the two forms involves a divergence of opinions. Henry James for one appears to scoff at all such attempts; he has written that "reality has many forms" and that "the novel and the romance, the novel of incident and that of character -- these clumsy separations appear to me to have been made by critics and readers for their own convenience"

(Approaches to the Novel, 303). But, for the moment, it is helpful to adopt some kind of distinction for the sake of understanding Grove's methods. If we accept Northrop Frye's divisioning, certain of Grove's works might be classified as romance in spite of their author's attitude toward romance, in spite of his apparent shunning of what he considers to be "romanticism," for, to Frye,

the essential difference between novel and romance lies in the conception of the characterization. The romancer does not attempt to create real people so much as stylized figures which expand into psychological archetypes. It is in the romance that we find Jung's libido, anima and shadow reflected in the hero, heroine and villain respectively. That is why the romance so often radiates a glow of subjective intensity that the novel lacks. (Anatomy of Criticism, 304)

We shall see in a moment that, despite Grove's expressions of dislike for the "romantic," his concept of the novelist's function leads toward the creation of psychological archetypes; we shall see presently that particularly the characters of such of his novels as The Yoke of Life and Settlers in the Marsh might easily wear Jungian masks.

Since Grove's studies of the self, of the psyche, follow paths blazed before him by Rousseau and particularly by Goethe, it is illuminating to note here what Fiedler has to say about the development of the novel as a study of the human heart:

From Richardson both Goethe and Rousseau learned that the subject of the novel is the human heart, which is to say, the psyche in all its complexities and dark self deceits. (Love and Death in the American Novel, 84)

Further, since critics such as Pacey have pointed out the gothic strain in some of Grove's writings, it is also of interest to read further how Fiedler, in striking and symbolic terms, relates the search of self to the gothic genre:

From the time of Richardson, the chief end of the novel has been made clear, not to treat virtue but the human heart, "to carry the torch to the back of the cave," to reveal "the hideous Moor who lurks in its furthest reaches...." (Ibid., 123)

Fiedler proceeds, then, to trace the gothic romance as a development from Richardson, a development which "substitutes terror for love" at the heart of the novel, and one to which such writers as Rousseau and Goethe and Byron and Shelley all added a contribution; their work, we shall see, provided a not inconsiderable influence upon Grove. The flight of the gothic heroine, continues Fiedler, "is out of the known world into a dark region of make believe," and gradually the tradition changes "in the direction of substituting a male mind for the female one at the center of the novel" (Ibid., 85). The themes of Grove's novels A Search for America and The Yoke of Life both involve flight, while those of Our Daily Bread and Fruits of the Earth lead to retreat that is both physical and spiritual; in the case of the former, the theme leads to eventual insanity. Also, in accord with the trend, Grove confines his studies to the minds of males.

Repeatedly, as well, he blends the Don Juan theme with that of Faust; this, too, so Fiedler would have it, is a gothic continuation of romanticism.

There is a clue to the essential significance of the gothic precisely here -- in its imposition of the myth of Faust upon the archetype of Don Juan. Both mythic figures, to be sure, possessed the imagination of Europe at the point when men became for the first time conscious of the unconscious; and both represent the revolutionary reversal of ethic standards which followed. Don Juan and Faust alike are former villains of the orthodox made heroes in an age of unorthodoxy, Promethean or Satanic figures; and both came to stand for the lonely individual (the writer himself) challenging the mores of a bourgeois society. (Love and Death in the American Novel, 114)

In Grove's own life, as well as in that of his characters, he acted out this double role. As a youth who, by his own account, had been involved from the time of his birth in a bitter Oedipal triangle, who had sought to gain all knowledge, and who had been also an adulterer and a home-breaker, rebelliously he turned his back upon the old world and its ways. Having taken refuge in America, "the European dream world of escape," again, both in his own life and in the roles of characters in his fiction, he matches the American picture of the "poète maudit" described by Fiedler:

This is the heritage bequeathed by the age of sensibility to that of romanticism, this image of the poète maudit, the taboo figure whose blessing is his curse, the sensitive young man too good for a world he never made.... Particularly in America, where a nation of rootless men confronts not the vestiges of older cultures but the wilderness, this loneliness is most deeply felt And here the artist, sole aristocrat in a world that has denied the aristocratic principle, must play out against great odds the role of Werther, and Don Juan, the part of Faust. (Ibid., 95)

Yet in spite of the obvious influence upon Grove of romanticism and all of its implications, in spite of the parallelism between, say, his characters Phil Branden and Len Werner and such romantic archetypes as Werther and Faust, in his portrayals of man in the new world he stubbornly insists that in method he is a realist. Writing of realism in his study of the rise of the novel, Ian Watt has pointed out that two kinds are to be found; in the second of these Grove's work may quite readily find itself a home.

There is, says Watt, the modern form of realism, which begins "from the position that truth can be discovered by the individual through his senses," and which reflects, beginning with the Renaissance, "a growing tendency for individual experience to replace collective

tradition as the ultimate arbiter of reality." This form, Watt shows, tends to clash with the Aristotelean version of realism, namely, that "the proper intellectual task of man was to rally against the meaningless flux of sensation and achieve a knowledge of the universals which alone constituted the ultimate and immutable reality" (Approaches to the Novel, 60, 62). This latter view, that reality is to be found in "timeless universals," is much nearer to Grove's concept. In an essay on "Realism in Literature," he sets forth his personal interpretation of the novelist's method and function:

Firstly, in realistic art the creative spirit as such will never appear in the first person; whatever it has to say it will say indirectly, through the medium of action and character....

Secondly, it will, in the indispensable and unavoidable interpretation which all artistic activity implies, ... aim at giving an as nearly universally valid reaction to the outside world as is possible to its own human limitation.

Thirdly, it will place itself and thereby the reader in the heart of things in such a way that they look on at what is happening from the inside, as if they were themselves a world consciousness which has its ramifications in all human beings that appear on the stage of the work of literature. (It Needs to Be Said, 76)

This "world consciousness" recalls Frye's "psychological archetypes"; this argument of Grove's suggests that to him breadth of view rather than a given literary technique, namely "modern" realism, is all-important; not how a thing is said, but what is said. Grove looks back to consider, for instance, not whether Homer has written realism or romance, but whether he has dealt with the universals:

Using facts and issues of his age like bricks, as it were, he embodied in his structure what is of no special age, the fate of all mankind as such In keeping his eye on the wider, the universal issues, he short-circuited the smaller currents of his time Behind them all stood the one great issue -- that of human life on earth -- which is the same today as it was at the dawn of history. (UTQ, IV, 55)

In accusing Grove of grafting "a romantic superstructure upon a realistic base," Pacey, says G. H. Clarke, has ignored "the alternative, what Arthur Symons has called romantic realism, the possible fusion of the two categories. Such fusion actually occurs in many of Conrad's novels and in such poems as 'Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came.'"⁵

In Grove's essay "A Writer's Classification of Writers and Their Work," he sheds further light on his interpretation of the difference between "romantic" and "classic" writing. (He uses the latter term, he says, because the word "realist" has, "in Anglo-Saxon parlance, assumed a narrow and misleading connotation, though strictly speaking, it would be the better term.")

No true artist of the first order will ever emphasize his own individuality It will pervade his work in spite of himself the farther this process of a subtle replacement by at least part of the personality observed by the personality observing goes, the more we approach, in the resultant reproduction, to a truly creative process and to an art which I would call classic in contradistinction to an art which, correspondingly, I call romantic. That is why romantic art, as narrative, knows both angels and devils, whereas in classic art both sides to a conflict ... are right because both are human and therefore more or less cognate to the artist That is also the reason why Dickens' "charming" young ladies fail to charm us, for Dickens, being at bottom a romanticist, failed to make them human or to mix into the stuff of which he made them some of the ingredients of his own coarse nature. (UTQ, I, 240)

Such a way of analyzing the aims and purposes of the artist, Clarke points out, "is to claim for realism alone the aims and processes that belong rather to literature itself."⁶ To Grove, it is true, both Shakespeare and Goethe are realists; when such as they are stirred to their depths, he adds in the same essay, "their souls glimmer and shimmer in a thousand colors never seen by mortal eye before and the result is a Hamlet, a Lear, or a Tasso or Faust. Then they succeed in revealing to us lesser men hidden potentialities of ourselves and of human life" (UTQ, I, 250).

An artist, Grove continues in this essay, must "die to life." In view of the fact that echoes of Shelley pervade both his A Search for America and The Yoke of Life, and that the latter contains close parallels with Alastor, it is of interest to note that Grove includes Shelley among examples of those writers who, having remained "nearer the surface, the greater the share of the objective world becomes [sic] in their creation" (Ibid., 250). It should be added, of course, that these two books about adolescence and youth were, in their early forms, shaped or written many years before Grove made this pronouncement on romanticism.

There is a further clue to Grove's concept of romanticism in his autobiography. He had laid aside a manuscript which he had entitled "Pioneers," -- it was finally published under the title Settlers of the Marsh -- because of the appearance of Hamsun's Growth of the Soil. Presently he resumed his work, after having come to the conclusion that his aim had, after all, "been fundamentally different from that of Hamsun:

In Hamsun's book I came to see a thing I abhorred, namedly romanticism; which means essentially a view of life in which circumstance is conquered by endeavour only if endeavour is aided by the *deus ex machina*. In other words, as I expressed it to myself, if man is justified by faith instead of by works; or if faith exists in the face of the strongest disproof and is ultimately upheld by an external intervention, natural or supernatural. This intervention is personified, in Hamsun's book, by the figure of Geissler. That has never been my view. (In Search of Myself, 356)

"In other words," comments Pacey, "as Grove sees it ... the point of difference between his own work and that of Hamsun is that his vision is more consistently realistic than that of the Norwegian novelist" (Frederick Philip Grove, 133).

If, then, while excluding certain reservations we grant to Grove the term realism in describing the method of his work, what he calls "plain bread -- the bread of sanity," we find also that this concept is generally in harmony with critical comment about his books. He is, says T. H. Saunders,

the first author in Canada to introduce realism into his writing, first in his essays (1922) and later in his novels, starting with Settlers of the Marsh in 1925. This alone assures him of a place in our literature. But when it is realized that Grove was writing from as early as 1892 (three decades before he found publication) his pioneering in this respect takes on added significance. (QQ, LXX, 24)

In his article Saunders makes a useful summary of the critical estimate of Grove's work. There are those, he says, who "find his writings dull, his subject-treatment unimaginative, his dialogue stilted, his style archaic." On the other hand, he adds, his admirers "will admit to flaws in Grove's writing, but they will not admit that a catalogue of his flaws is an adequate summation of his work." Saunders then proceeds to list the "imposing array" of his excellences:

the accuracy and relevance of his nature descriptions, his ability to relate these to the human situation, the artistic integrity that gives his writing a quality of uncompromising realism, his concept of the novel as a work of art that reveals the tragic dimension in life, his power to evoke elemental forces in nature and man as the essence of tragic conflict, and, in rare moments, his ability to convey to the reader the conviction that the issues with which he deals are issues of cosmic importance. (Ibid., 23)

Today little if any critical comment has included the observation that Grove's chief concern is the self, "the human heart and soul," those "worlds within the world" of which he writes repeatedly. In this thesis I shall attempt to show, then, that in all of his major writings his objective is to explore this self. His search,

I shall demonstrate first, he pursues symbolically in nature, with ambivalent conclusions; there man is at home and not at home; there a symbolic journeying into nature's heart reveals a certain hollowness in the self. Yet, at the same time, this hollowness is attended by something permanent and unquenchable within man's being; this very quality in man's inmost spirit which appears to be eternal reminds us of what Brod has said of Kafka's quest:

Man cannot live without a lasting trust in something indestructible within himself. This ideal preoccupied him throughout his life.
(Franz Kafka, A Biography, 214)

Within this thesis I shall also attempt to demonstrate that Grove's study of the self reveals facets of the human spirit as it is confronted and affected by several different conflicts, each of these conflicts being in turn a product of change and development and the wearing of time. These may be listed as, first, a conflict between the individual self and society, with man's aspirations remaining eternally unsatisfied and with his spirit in a sense remaining abidingly "alien;" second, a conflict within the individual himself between mind and body, between "head" and "heart", a conflict which is sometimes the product of sexual drive at variance with conventional morality; third, a conflict of the generations of man, of a father and his sons. In this regard, concerning the self in time according to Grove's assessment the self remains a something "indestructible," passing from generation to generation through the ages.

Finally, I shall look briefly at the measure of personal revelation in Grove's writings insofar as it sheds light on the measure of his own integrity in revealing the human self.

II

THE UNDISCOVERED CONTINENT: MAN'S SELF IN NATURE

A survey of Grove's search for man's self as defined in nature reveals that seeking to be both baffling and satisfying; it recalls once more that despairing search of Matthew Arnold in "The Buried Life:"

Fate, which foresaw
How frivolous a baby man would be--
By what distractions he would be possessed,
How he would pour himself in every strife,
And well-nigh change his own identity--
That it might keep from his capricious play
His genuine self, and force him to obey
Even in his own despite his being's law,
Bade through the deep recesses of our breast
The unregarded river of our life
Pursue with indiscernible flow its way;
And that we should not see
The buried stream, and seem to be
Eddying at large in blind uncertainty,
Though driving on with it eternally. (30-44)

To find, in relation to nature, this "genuine self," Grove concedes that this universe, in which man is "trapped" (In Search of Myself, 162), is much more than the mere gaoler of the human being. Nature is both mother and mate, friend and enemy, comforter and destroyer; in the wilderness she prepares an Eden for him away from the demonic city; at the same time she is both actively hostile and passively indifferent to him; she is a symbol of death and an instrument whereby man, in a symbolic journey down a river and into the heart of the wilderness, may discover the hollowness of his own core. There, facing up to this quality of hollowness within himself, he may triumph in his disillusion by clinging, like Kafka, to a something within himself that is at the same time "indestructible." Eventually, in nature's

slow ruthless march through the centuries, she attempts to crush man almost to the point of annihilation.

This chapter, then will review a major question that Grove is trying to answer, "Is man ever at home in the universe?"

Such a survey of Grove's search must first of all point out the obvious, that both his quest and his findings are going to be affected by the old world as well as by the new. As an adolescent in his native Europe, Grove shared the contempt of the European for the men of the new world:

Finding them wanting, I inferred that their work would one day be found wanting as well.... They impressed me like hosts of invaders from some distant planet, the moon, or Mars, pullulating about the remnants left by a race of supermen of the past. (In Search of Myself, 86)

Presently Grove found himself in America and his view began to change. Inevitably, he began to share something of what is perhaps the typical attitude of the immigrant, the attitude which sees the western hemisphere as the American dream-world of escape to which, as Leslie Fiedler has said, "the hero retreats to await rebirth" (Love and Death in the American Novel, xxxii). In that most autobiographical of Grove's works of fiction, In Search of America, which in its original form was written in the year 1893, shortly after his arrival on this continent, he becomes the young immigrant, Phil Branden.¹ Looking over this new land with his European eyes, Branden is quickly convinced that "the American ideal was right; that it meant a tremendous advance over anything which before the war could reasonably be called the ideal of Europe" (In Search of America, 381).

At the same time, Branden (or Grove) is fully aware that the ideal must be fought for:

The Golden Age stands at the never-attainable end of history, not at Man's origins Europe regards the past; America regards the future. America is an ideal and as such has to be striven for; it has to be realized in partial victories. (Ibid., 382)

Not by looking back at Europe, but by looking inward at themselves, Grove also tells Canadians, can they hope to move forward. When he was aged nineteen, he accompanied a great-uncle all the way across Siberia; later he was to see many parallels between that immense country and Canada:

Like Siberia, Canada needed to be fought for by the soul; but very few Canadians know it. They think of it as of a Europe enlarged. (In Search of Myself, 150)

If man is to know himself, Grove believes, he must first of all realize that he is inescapably a portion of nature's plan in the universe. Just as the discovery of Eskimos living in the forbidding Arctic wastes showed eighteenth-century men that human beings may be an integral part of nature in whatever form she shows herself, so that journey across Siberia, which afforded Grove the sight of nomadic Kerghiz herdsmen dwelling on what to him was a land of utter desolation, imprinted this awareness on his mind:

A revelation came to me. All these humans, -- for incredibly, like myself, they were human -- represented mere wavelets on the stream of a seminal, germinal life which flowed through them, which had propagated itself, for millennia, through them, almost without, perhaps even against, their will and desire. They had done what they must do; and from their doings life had sprung. (Ibid., 153)

Further, this universe of which man forms an integral part possesses its own plan, its own unity. Grove's creed stresses that unity:

I do not, never did, believe in a personal god, in some absentee landlord who, by some fiat, orders my life. But I believe in the unity of all life; in the unity of the urge which compels the atoms of the quartz to array themselves in the form of a crystal; with the urge which holds the stars in their courses or which made me sit down to write this last will and testament of my life. (Ibid., 230)

To return to the young immigrant Grove, speaking as Phil Branden, repeatedly he sees himself as a seed cast off by the mother in the cyclical pattern of growth and death:

I suddenly saw myself as a mere germ, as a seed that wanted to be planted. I realized that I was nothing finished; that there were still possibilities of growth in me. But, unless I found the soil in which I could grow, I was bound to perish. (In Search of America, 103)

Previously, as a young cosmopolitan with money for travel furnished by his parents, his feelings toward the external world had been impersonal only; nature had been to him merely a spectacle:

Nature, I am sorry to say, meant to me then what it emphatically does not mean to me now; in America I might have summarized it under the headings Niagara, Yellowstone, the Grand Canyon, and maybe the Yosemite and the Big Trees. (Ibid., 17)

Presently, in his loneliness, his attitude begins to change:

For the first time in my life the commonplace in nature, -- the Near-at-hand, -- took hold of me and gripped my soul; so that I nearly burst into tears. A squirrel chattered at me; I longed to be able to love it. (Ibid., 90)

After weeks of tramping westward into the great rural heart of the United States, what may have been the longing of the child seed for the mother plant that has flung it off becomes the heart-sick yearning of the male for the female:

Every morning I awoke as to a feast. I was young, in the early years of manhood. My whole body and soul were astir with the possibilities of passion. Love was not only a potentiality; it was a prime need; it was a craving, a cry of my innermost being. And this love had no object except the woods, the mountains, the streams; bird, insect, beast, gossamer threads, smoky haze, the smell of the earth. These, or more briefly, the country, I loved.

My love for it was not the love for a friend -- which is the love for that which is not; it idealizes, substitutes, omits, redraws. It was not the love for the mother -- which is the love for origins, help, food, shelter, care, guidance, akin to gratitude. It was the love for the bride, full of desires, seeking all things, accepting them, craving fulfilment of higher destinies Every fibre of my being yearned. (Ibid., 338)

We shall see presently that to Grove in Canada nature will present ambivalent symbols; she will be mother and alien spirit and a sacred force or god; undoubtedly also at times she will be both bride and home. Especially now, in America, this impassioned cry, suggestive of the yearning within Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey," is the instinctive craving of the human heart for the mate, for the complementary being. It is a cry that recalls the sensual gesture of young Judith in Wild Geese:

Not knowing fully what she was doing, Judith took off all her clothing and lay flat on the damp ground with the waxy feeling of new, sunless vegetation under her ... Oh, how knowing the bare earth was, as if it might have a heart and mind hidden here in the woods. (Wild Geese, 53)

At the same time, young Branden is ready to fight back against nature's threat to the annihilation of the self:

A cat, crouched low at the edge of a pond in which fishes are playing, glistening in the beams of the sun; the cat reaches out with incredible swiftness of paw; one of the beautiful creatures flies up, out of the water, on to the bank; the very next moment it wriggles, and writhes between the cat's teeth. -- A hawk, sweeping down upon a bare spot between bushes and striking its talons into the quivering flesh of a chick which gives the universal cry of agonized death. -- A snake, coiled up in a ditch, and a toad hopping inadvertently near; the next moment the toad fights and pulls and strains against the suck in the mouth of the snake; for the snake, changing suddenly into a fury of wiry, writhing lust, has struck and caught its hind feet. These sights I had seen on my rambles in Westchester county. Especially vivid was the horror of the toad's fight against the jaws of the snake.... If that was America, then let my curses ring out over America! I was neither cat, hawk, nor snake. (In Search of America, 160)

In Grove's second study of adolescence, written in its earliest form before the first World War, the mind of his hero, young Len Sterner,

becomes obsessed with death; he looks with different eyes upon the natural law of eat and be eaten:

Get used to the presence of death, he said. This wind means death to thousands of creatures. I saw, this morning, fish stranded on the shore, and crows waiting to devour them. I saw the holes of rats and gophers filled. We are no more than they, little as we may think of them in our ignorance. (The Yoke of Life, 310)

A similarly ambivalent attitude toward the human self in relation to nature is to be found in the book of essays Over Prairie Trails. At first the author experiences both delight and awe and tenderness; nature is mother and mate, or bride, and soul companion; gradually the journeys over the trails explore the self in progressively darkening tones. In the beginning, as in A Search for America, "a great tenderness takes possession" of him for the wild things; he is vouchsafed signs which reassure him "once more and still further of the absolute friendliness of all creation" for himself (Over Prairie Trails, 13). He feels "a sense of comfort." The name, by the way, Over Prairie Trails, is a flagrant misnomer; Grove's journeys as depicted in these essays are made in deep Manitoba "bush" country, much of it so hostile to man that we may suspect his inspiration for picturing it to have been Hardy's Egdon heath, a portrayal which Grove admired tremendously.

To Grove, as to Clym in Egdon heath, this Manitoba bushland is "God's own earth and second only to Paradise" (Ibid., 15). So far, this journeying without and journeying within are pleasurable and satisfying.

At this point we may well pause to examine briefly a dearly-held tenet of Grove's, namely, that the wilderness offers man an Eden or paradise and, conversely, that the city is demonic. "Following such

writers as Rousseau, Wordsworth, and Thoreau," says Pacey, "he appears to believe that human life attains its noblest development in rustic surroundings" (Frederick Philip Grove, 98). The influence closest to Grove, however, is that of the Norwegian, Knut Hamsun. "Perhaps no other book," he writes of Growth of the Soil, "has had a more decisive influence on the formulation of my theories" (In Search of Myself, 356).

A brief glance at one or two paragraphs in the Norwegian book illustrates something of this. Isak, the pioneering central figure of the book, is sowing his first grain:

For generations back, into forgotten time, his fathers before him had sowed grain.... Isak walked bareheaded, in Jesu name, a sower. Like a tree-stump with hands to look at, but in his heart like a child. Every cast was made with care, in a spirit of kindly resignation.... (Growth of the Soil, 30)

The novel traces the fortunes, good and bad, of Isak and his family during a quarter of a century. Isak's attitude recalls the young Phil Branden and his Wordsworthian reverence for nature that in Branden as in Wordsworth appears to be both sexual and sacred; to Isak the soil is particularly a sacred thing, a kind of god or perhaps a church or an altar, and his worship of it has repaid him a thousandfold. The novel concludes with the sacred rite of sowing:

Isak at his sowing; a stump of a man, a barge of a man to look at, nothing more. Clad in homespun ... and he walks religiously bare-headed to that work A tiller of the ground, body and soul, a worker on the land without respite. A ghost risen out of the past to point the future, a man from the earliest days of cultivation, a settler in the wilds, nine hundred years old, and, withal, a man of the day.... (Growth of the Soil, 434)

Particularly do two of the vignettes in Grove's book The Turn of the Year reflect the parallel with Hamsun. Chapter Two, entitled "The Sower," which W. E. Collin singles out as "un chef d'oeuvre,"²

paints the picture of the elderly Icelandic pioneer in Manitoba to whom sowing and reaping have become "a religious exercise":

He bares and bows his head, as he stands between horses and seeder, and mutters a prayer. "God," he says in his own Icelandic tongue, "I do as thou bidst me that those who are hungry be fed...." (The Turn of the Year, 63)

Wife and children have gone off to live in the easeful city, but the old man continues his sowing and his harvesting:

To clear the land and leave it untilled, would be sin. And the children, even though they may be, as it is called, making their living, yet need bread; and so they may not take that bread from others who need it and for whom there is no one to grow it, he must still grow it for them that their life would remain free of sin.... (Ibid., 64)

Similarly, in Chapter Eight of this book, which is entitled "Harvest," we find another definite echo of Hamsun. This time, the toiler on the Manitoba farmland is Slavonic; again the ritual of his work is sacred, consecrated to God. With touches that remind Isabel Skelton of "a Millet picture,"³ Grove sketches him in a "half dusk" that suggests a dim religious light. Of him he concludes:

They, the teeming millions, may think that he is their servant; but he knows better; not they are his masters; his master is one, his master is God....

He became to me the man who stands squarely on the soil and who, from his soil ... reaches out with tentative mind, and with a great seriousness -- far beyond that of a mere thinker or scientist -- gropes his sure and unmistakable way into the great, primeval mysteries which are the same today as at the dawn of history. (Ibid., 211)

In another of Grove's early novels Our Daily Bread is to be found a kindred attitude:

Empires rose and fell; kings and high priests strove with each other; wars were fought; ripples on the sea of life. Underneath, deep down, that life went on as it had done in Abraham's time: the land was tilled to grow our daily bread. And this life, the life of the vast majority of men on earth, was the essential life of all mankind. The city with its multifarious activities was nothing but a bubble on that sea.

He was proud of belonging to the hidden ground-mass of that race which carried on essential tasks, no matter under what form of government, no matter under what conditions of climate and soil: he had lived and multiplied; he had grown, created, not acquired his and his children's daily bread: he had served God. (Our Daily Bread, 190)

These lines reflect not only Hamsun's point of view as illustrated in Growth of the Soil; they also, as E. A. McCourt points out, suggest a bond with Hardy's "In Time of the Breaking of Nations." Commenting on this passage from Grove, McCourt calls attention to its "recognition of the mystical significance of the tilling of the soil, an awareness of labour which is part of a religious ceremony" (The Canadian West in Fiction, 61). In this respect, Fiedler would probably suggest that Grove is also North American in reflecting Rousseau's influence:

It is Rousseau's compelling vision of a society uncompromised by culture, of simple piety and virtue bred by Nature, that is, the untended lands, that has left the deepest impression on the American mind. (Love and Death in the American Novel, xxxiv)

By contrast with the good earth, to Grove the city is artificial, with shoddy false values; or it is demonic, a hell breeding evil. Again, Hamsun leaves no doubt that this is also his vision of the city. Inger, Isak's wife, has to spend six years in Trondjhem for infanticide. When she returns, "a trifle of unrest has crept in."

Here was a strong and healthy woman, sensible enough, but spoiled and warped by long confinement in an artificial air--and she had butted into a man who stood firmly on his feet. Never for a moment had he left his natural place on the earth, on the soil. Nothing could move him. (Growth of the Soil, 127)

The older son, Eleseus, is sent to the town to be apprenticed to an engineer. He grows into an ineffectual wastrel, a misfit who eventually drifts away to America. Hamsun shows clearly that the transplanting to the town way of life has ruined him:

Something unfortunate, ill-fated about this young man, as if something were rotting him from within. That engineer from the town, good man -- better perhaps, if he had not discovered the lad in his youth and taken him up to make something out of him; the child had lost his roothold, and suffered thereby. All that he turns to now leads back to something wanting in him, something dark against the light. (Ibid., 418)

Whereas, by contrast, says Hamsun, "a man of the wilds did not lose his head.... Growth of the soil was something different, a thing to be procured at any cost; the only source, the origin of all" (Ibid., 376). The lad's mother, Inger, "has made her stormy voyage, 'tis true, has lived in the city for a while, but now she is home" (Ibid., 435). Gradually the renewed contact with the sacred soil of home has cleansed her soul; the book concludes with a picture of her as a "Vestal" tending the fire in her kitchen.

Likewise, Grove's books contain similar evaluations of the city as contrasted with the country. In Our Daily Bread John Elliot's son-in-law admits that the bustling, whirlwind routine of their life in the city "is a crazy life to live" (Our Daily Bread, 178). Abe Spalding in Fruits of the Earth must face, like the Icelandic sower, the bitterness of seeing his children quit their home in preference for the town. Ralph Patterson of Two Generations invests in a "town" project which almost ruins him financially and appears to threaten his spiritual integrity; he is a farmer and should remain a farmer, his wife warns him, the implication being that knowledge of another kind of morals is necessary for success in an urban area. How is Toronto? Ralph inquires of his daughter Alice upon her return from university there. "Hideous," she answers.

He nodded. "In a sensible world, there would be no justification for a place like that. It revenges itself upon those who go there."

Phil looked up, smiling. "Revenge itself?"

"It's the purpose of the city to serve the country. The city should be a means, not an end. The moment it becomes an end, it falls heir to all the evils that attend overcrowding." (Two Generations, 257)

A dim foreshadowing of the evil of the demonic city disturbs Len, the youthful protagonist of The Yoke of Life, as he approaches it for the first time:

Huge yellow street cars thundered past him in the middle of the driveway; automobiles glided along in unbroken streams; the entrances to moving picture halls blared their lights at him, and as he went south, an ever increasing current of humanity seemed to engulf him....

Enormous arc lights threw their domes of visibility aloft like luminous cowls into an atmosphere murky with steam and smoke, and against buildings that seemed to tower one above the other. A train rumbled overhead....

Len stopped and stood, watching the lights that seemed to be shifting about as the convoluted clouds of steam into which they fell moved and whirled. His heart sank within him. Intelligences more than human must be directing this chaos if order evolved out of it. (The Yoke of Life, 227)

Presently the city "no longer daunted or awed him. It amused him, instead. What amused him was the seeming futility of its pursuits" (Ibid., 232).

In Settlers of the Marsh, Niels Lindstedt shares Len's feelings. To him, it seems always that, for town-people, "The most important problem was what to do with their time."

A feeling of general dissatisfaction possessed him.... On his land he was master; he knew just how to act. Here in town, people did with him as they pleased. Store-keepers tried to sell him what he did not want; at the hotel they fed him with things he did not like. The banker with whom he had sought an interview dismissed him at his own imperious pleasure.... And the attitude of superiority everybody assumed.... They were quicker at repartee -- silly, stupid repartee; and they were quick at it because they did not do much else but practise it.... (Settlers of the Marsh, 126)

The critic W. E. Collin regards Niels' story, as told in this book as "une dramatisation du conflit entre le paysan et la ville":

Clara était une citadine, une veuve. Neils, dans son innocence, l'épousa. Lorsqu'elle s'établit sur la ferme de Niels, nous assistons à l'invasion de la campagne par la ville. La lutte entre elle et Niels lorsqu'elle se prépare à retourner à la ville, à ses anciens dieux, est une dramatisation du conflit entre le paysan et la ville. Le résultat est tragique; la mort de Clara et l'emprisonnement de Niels. Le conflit est souvent évoqué dans les livres de Grove, mais nulle part avec autant de succès que dans Settlers of the Marsh, où il atteint aux proportions d'une tragédie classique et représente une des plus grandes réussites artistiques de Grove.⁴

Seen as this kind of conflict, the story paints the city in most unfavorable terms. Clara, the symbol of the city, supplements her widow's resources by prostitution. Her way of dress is attractive but garish; stripped of its surface make-up, her face startles Niels: For the fraction of a second, he had thought it was the face of a perfect stranger. It had been that of an aging woman, yellow, lined with sharp wrinkles and black hollows under the eyes, the lips pale like the face.... (Settlers of the Marsh, 252)

The story traces the demoralizing influence of this sinister urban symbol upon the mind and the soul of the noble young rural giant, Niels. With the murder of Clara, the process is abruptly and finally stopped; after a period of doing penance in gaol, a chastened Niels is permitted to return to his rural paradise.

Undoubtedly, from this story, Grove intends us to conclude that city ways may breed evil in the country. But such a conclusion, at the same time, suggests an extreme over-simplification of Grove's attitude toward the natural universe in its relation to the self. To return to the essays Over Prairie Trails, we noted that in the first of his journeys through the Manitoba backwoods bushland, this region is "God's own earth and second only to Paradise." Gradually

the Eden-like qualities of the countryside are dissipated; already, by the second journey, the sense of "infinite comfort" becomes tinged with a quality of an external force acting upon it, "a force that has something irresistible about it and, indeed, largely beyond your control, wafts you over mile after mile of fabled distance" (Over Prairie Trails, 34).

In the next journey described in these essays, the shadow still overhangs the delight. The time is that impressive hour, the stillest before the dawn; it has about it "the delicacy, the tenderness of all young things," and a kind of almost mystic luminosity "like the halo around the Saviour's face." Here there is a specific suggestion of a shadowed journey into self; there is "sadness in the mood" and the author would "remark upon the futility and innate vanity of things" (Ibid., 51).

As the fourth journey progresses, the symbolism darkens. Man, studying the heart of nature, finds that nature is studying him. The landscape begins to present inimical aspects; little whirls of snow rise and fall as if they "meant to have a look at me, the interloper" (Ibid., 67). Finally the real significance of the landscape "dawned upon my consciousness." Now there are definite inklings that suggest a hostile universe, inklings that at the same time foreshadow a Conradian journeying into the dark heart of man.

This is a winter journey and the exfoliation of the snow forms a kind of sink-hole or pit of hell, at the same time looking "harsh, ... millennial old, ... antedeluvian and pre-Adamic." At the same time, the sun gazes upon the voyager in a fashion that is "relentless, inexorable,

cruel," and "with something of a sneer in the pitiless way" in which he looks down "on the infertile waste around." (Ibid., 73)

Next, Grove hints that this is a kind of epic journeying into a wasteland and that he has in mind the experiences of that timeless human being Odysseus, who symbolizes man's eternal helplessness in a hostile universe. "Unaccountably," Grove continues here, "two Greek words formed on my lips, Homer's *pontos atrygetos*, the barren sea." In his youth, Grove had been passionately fond of Greek literature; as in The Odyssey, these journeys of his in this book of essays represent the struggles of a man to reach his "home." Indeed, from time to time, the author seems almost to be that Ulysses of many wiles, who with utmost cunning is trying to outwit monsters in natural shapes.

More and more unmistakably now, nature in the form of snow reveals itself to Grove as the declared opponent of man, showing itself to him in a number of malevolent guises. Like Ulysses, he tries to match his wits against those of his opponent: "I began, as it were, to study the mentality of my enemy." It rears itself "like a boa constrictor, ready to strike at its prey." Then it throws itself "into the semblance of some formidable animal -- more like a gorilla than anything else" (Ibid., 82).

Suddenly, nature abandons the author to his fate with an indifference that is worse than a show of hostility:

What I saw baffled me for a moment so completely that I just sat there and gasped. There was no road ... (Ibid., 83).

With horses and cutter rearing and plunging and then rearing again, they climb a snow-drift that has buried trees to their tops:

I shall never forget the weird kind of astonishment when the fact came home to me that what snapped and crackled in the snow under the horses' hoofs, were the tops of the trees. Nor shall the feeling of estrangement, as it were -- as if I were not myself, but looking on from the outside at the adventure of somebody who yet was I -- the feeling of other-worldliness, if you will pardon the word, ever fade from my memory -- a feeling of having been carried beyond my depth where I could not swim.... I have seen sights today that I did not expect to see before my dying day.... (Ibid., 86, 90)

This visionary-like experience of Grove's is attended by horror rather than joy, the kind of horror which surrounds Kurtz when in Conrad's Heart of Darkness he becomes aware of the bleak emptiness of his own soul.

The next journeys in Over Prairie Trails confirm this fearful realization. Images that recall the "watchful intentness" of Egdon heath and its awakening "that was almost feline in its stealthiness" (The Return of the Native, 4, 225) picture the snow as cruelly crawling as a cat, about to pounce upon its prey. Yet, Grove hastens to remind us, in nature "the cat is not cruel either -- we merely call it so!" At the same time, he continues, nature, "with her utter lack of sentiment," strips down "our pretences with a relentless finger, and we stand, bare of disguises, as helpless failures" (Ibid., 118). Once man has accepted the teachings of nature, that his core is hollow and that his existence means nothing to her, he must cling, as Kafka has done, to that something "indestructible" in mankind; in his later book of essays It Needs to Be Said Grove himself asserts that human life is inevitably tragic, but that great literature, having accepted both this and man's limitations, reflects the "indomitable spirit" of mankind (It Needs to Be Said, 87).

In fact, he continues in Over Prairie Trails, once man has looked truth squarely in the face and accepted the teachings of nature, he may now find that she is "after all the only real soother of anguished nerves," and presently he can succumb "to the influence of nature's merry mood" (Over Prairie Trails, 119, 121).

At last, in the final journey of this series, nature repeats her lesson to show her mastery over man; getting in their work "more tellingly," this time it is not snow in its various manifestations but the skies that break his nerve (*Ibid.*, 145).

In his autobiography Grove confesses that he has never believed in a personal God. These essays in Over Prairie Trails suggest that for him, instead, the all-powerful one is the natural universe which takes the place also of the Homeric gods, those beings who, in Hardy's words, make "their sport" with man. From Grove's second book of essays The Turn of the Year Pacey quotes a paragraph to illustrate that "Grove has felt the disillusioning effect of later nineteenth century thought." In it the Manitoba bush is, like Conrad's jungle, equated with death:

Dark, unknown, and gloomy, the shade of night seemed to crouch in these woods, ready to leap out on the clearings and the road, as soon as the sun should sink, threatening with incomprehensible potentialities. Somehow these woods reminded me of Darwin's description of the forests of Tierra del Fuego. I could not get rid of the feeling that they were not a monument of the intensity of life so much as rather one of everlasting death itself. Not growth seemed to predominate, but what we call decay, though that is merely one of the forms of growth. These woods had been like that when the Indians roamed them as the lords of creation. Human life had beaten against them in little, insignificant, lapping waves. It had ebbed and flowed, come and gone.

The above passage, says Pacey, includes a note to be found frequently in Grove's writings, "that evocation of the long dim

corridors of time which gives perspective and universality of reference" (Frederick Philip Grove, 99, 100).

Here is certainly, also, another echo of Hardy. Human life is puny and insignificant in the face of a universe which may be hostile or playfully entertaining, but which is always beyond the reach of man's influence:

The untameable, Ishmaelitish thing that Egdon now was it always had been. Civilization was its enemy.... The great inviolate place had an ancient permanence which the sea cannot claim. (Return of the Native, 7)

An earlier influence upon Grove's thought is undoubtedly that of the Russian novelist Turgenev, whom he includes among a list of names of authors that he has read. "Fathers and Sons," he writes in his autobiography, "would have been the logical title" for Two Generations; "unfortunately, Turgenev had anticipated it. He had anticipated me once before, for the natural title of Our Daily Bread would have been Lear of the Prairie" (In Search of Myself, 440). In Fathers and Sons the young nihilist Bazarov comments as follows:

The tiny space I occupy is so infinitely small in comparison with the rest of space, in which I am not, and which has nothing to do with me; and the period of time in which it is my lot to live is so petty beside the eternity in which I have not been and shall not be.... (Fathers and Sons, 222)

Like Hardy's characters, like the Kirghiz tribesmen, like the atom in the quartz, to Grove man is "trapped" in the universe, and "defending himself on all fronts against a cosmic attack" (In Search of Myself, 162). This sense of nature embattled against man impresses Abe Spalding with an awareness of the futility of the fight. Five years before, he has built a magnificent home on the southern Manitoba plain.

Five years only. Yet already little sand grains embedded in the mortar were crumbling away.... The moment a work of man was finished, nature set to work to take it down again. (Fruits of the Earth, 160)

Even more dispiriting to Abe is the sight of the great drainage ditches that had been gouged out of the low-lying prairie:

Even at the time these man-made diggings impressed the beholder who came from a distance, with perceptions undulled by familiarity, -- and it was less than twenty years since they had been dug -- like the prehistoric remains of a system devised by some mightier race gone to its accountings; so completely had the prairie grass obliterated the traces of the tools used in their excavation....

Owing to the peculiar difficulties of drainage with which the farmer had to contend, man remains distinctly an interloper....

It is a landscape in which, to him who surrenders himself, the sense of one's life as a whole seems always present, birth and death being mere scansions in the flow of a somewhat debilitated stream of vitality. (Ibid., 163, 164)

Metaphors equating the ocean with the Manitoba plain are as much of a commonplace as those equating it with life. To the giant Abe Spalding, something of both metaphors comes to trouble his mind:

His farm had been floated on that prairie as the shipwright floats a vessel on the sea, looking not so much at the waves which are to batter it as at the fittings which secure the comfort of those within. But such a vessel may be engulfed by such a sea. (Ibid., 165)

However puny may be man's place and man's role, to Grove, with his nineteenth-century kinship, this universe appears to have a sense of both plan and of movement. Among writers of that period he particularly admired Meredith -- his Search for America is dedicated "to the illustrious triad," Meredith, Swinburne and Hardy -- and Grove's sense of a universe that is fixed and implacable is reminiscent of Meredith's "army of unalterable law." At the same time, Grove is conscious of the slow march of the universe through the centuries, a march in which man may be thrown up like a shell on the beach of time.

Thus, seeming to speak in A Search for America with the voice of

Phil Branden, does he expatiate on this thought:

And suddenly I realized that the beach on which I was sitting consisted of myriads and millions of shells, thrown up by the waves from the deep, from their home, here to die, to be ground to pieces by the wash of the surf. It was a great shock Why did all these myriads and millions of living beings have to live, if they lived only to die, and to die in such a way, such a cruel casual way, devoid of meaning? God all-good? I asked. He could be all-good only if he was also all-ignorant, not all-knowing. My whole inner consciousness was like the raw flesh of a frightful wound; yes, I was such a shell thrown on these shores, in the process of being ground to pieces and fragments, in order to furnish the soil for others to stand on and maybe to thrive on. (In Search of America, 137)

This symbol of the empty shell recurs in Grove's writings; particularly does it call to mind the role of nature in revealing the hollow core of man's self as depicted in the essays Over Prairie Trails.

On the other hand, in The Master of the Mill when man's self is first pitted against the machinations of nature, that self seems to be enjoying a kind of triumph. Young Edmund speaks with "something like exaltation" as he commends to his father Sam the splendid courage of his grandfather Rudyard in setting fire to the old mill:

Think for a moment. The old man had the courage to sweep a worn-out world into limbo. He had long wanted to shape the mill to man's ultimate purpose. In him he felt the power to make nature subservient to his design, to the design of man himself. (The Master of the Mill, 225)

But Rudyard's dishonesty cancels, as it were, the splendor of his gesture; to borrow from Blake, the golden Jerusalem becomes in very fact a Satanic mill, strangling all the nobler impulses of the son, and entrapping him in its relentless and overpowering might:

Through his father's death and the disclosure following it the mill had changed its entire character. It looked at him out of an ironic Mephistophelean face. Like himself, the mill held the dead man's blood; the blood of one going forward on his path under the compulsion of his own nature unmodified by humanitarian thought. Not as an individual had the old man faced the world; he had faced it as a cog in a machine. (Ibid., 112)

In Erewhon Samuel Butler had seemed to predict that the machine would eventually rule man; young Edmund, who has Big Brother's lust for power and who has admired his grandfather's attempt to make nature subservient to his own will, is cut down in his prime during a workers' strike.⁵ The Master of the Mill was published four years before 1984; for Grove it is not the Big Brothers who will dominate man in the end but "that outward demonstration of the human spirit," the mill, or the machine, or the mill as perhaps some kind of space rocket or satellite:

The whole scene, by the very contrast with the turmoil outside, made the impression on him as if the mill could go on were the planet to leave its orbit, to be shivered to fragments in some cosmic encounter. He silently laughed at the idea of the mill as a whole revolving around the sun or some other star, like a meteor through a final chaos, scattering flour dust in its instellar wake; but the laugh was bitter. (The Master of the Mill, 319)

The old man approaches his death, but the mill, a symbol of good and of evil, grinds triumphantly on:

When man went to rest, with the fall of darkness, it went on, with never-wearied muscles of steel, producing his food for the morrow. Man was born, suffered and died; but the mill watched over him, this mill and others. The mill was a god to him, all-provident, all-powerful. It even provided for its own procreation: that mill which was composite of all mills; for its essence was hermaphroditic.

Snow-white it stood before his eyes, flooded by light it produced itself. Its outline was that of a pyramid, flame-shaped. But it was lighted not only from without, from within as well; it stood in, and was, a pool of light; it was the light of the new world.

It had grown out of the product of its own logic: it had grown out of the earth. The Clarks had been mere pygmy helpers in bringing it to life. Already it looked down into the valley as if it had done so for millennia. Thus it would look down forty centuries later when man perhaps had long since lost his capacity for aiding its workings: a marvel to future generations of races to whom it would be the life-giving god.... (Ibid., 328)

This novel shows us, writes W. E. Collin,

des hommes aux prises avec des machines qu'ils ont inventées, et a pour but de démontrer que, la mécanisation de l'industrie, une fois commencé, se développe selon la loi inhumaine de son être et ne peut être arrêtée avant d'avoir détruit l'humanité.⁶

Collin goes on to point out that all will not perish; as Grove himself makes clear in the conclusion of the novel, a few will survive "pour recommencer de bout en bout toute l'évolution humaine." Collin relates the conflict of this novel to that of such pioneers as John Elliot and Abe Spalding of Grove's earlier works. "Nous sommes encore en présence de l'impulsion du pionnier qui s'affirme, poursuivant un but qui s'évanouit toujours."⁷

The theme of this novel The Master of the Mill, in which man's self becomes involved with forces beyond his control and which frequently work to his disadvantage, also recalls some of Grove's conclusions in Over Prairie Trails. At this point it is of interest to note the timeliness of these conclusions as compared with those of other writers. Critics point out that Grove was published largely out of his time; Pacey calls attention to the fact that "most of his novels were conceived and largely written prior to the first Great War" (Frederick Philip Grove, 106). But Grove's conclusions seem to belong to a whole century rather than to a decade or two. It was in 1852 that Matthew Arnold expressed in "The Buried Life" a poignant sense of sterility in searching for the "genuine self" and the difficulties in obtaining more than mere glimpses of that inmost self; Conrad's Heart of Darkness appeared in 1899; Grove was writing his Over Prairie Trails in 1919, only six years before T. S. Eliot,

with an epigraph announcing "Mistah Kurtz, he is dead," proclaimed so arrestingly to all the world that "We are the hollow men." And perhaps the thought behind The Master of the Mill is more relevant today than is that of 1984. Fortunately for the reader's peace of mind, Grove's book concludes with the comforting words, "I have come to place a great confidence in the capacity of the collective human mind."

While in this latter book, then, Grove points to a deterministic universe threatening even man's survival, in another of his novels The Yoke of Life, he portrays a very different relationship between nature and man's inner self. We have seen that frequently the wilderness means for him a literal kind of Eden as contrasted with the city; in this novel a return to the wilderness seems to be equated with what we might call, in popular phrases, the "oceanic consciousness" or "the return to the womb." Here also the wilderness appears to become a kind of spiritual Zion where man may recover his soul; finally it seems actually to symbolize the very soul of man.

This last novel, for which Grove had in mind the title "Adolescence," bears obvious resemblances to certain well-known works of fiction. One of these is Jude the Obscure; in fact Lorne Pierce called The Yoke of Life "a pale imitation of Jude." Grove denied the charge; he had not seen the Hardy book, so he said (Frederick Philip Grove, 59). In some respects The Yoke of Life is closer to Shelley's Alastor and to Goethe's Sorrows of Werther. In both his autobiography and as Phil Branden in A Search for America

he dwells upon the influence upon him of the Romantic writers. Thus, for instance, does Branden write:

When I had gone to Italy I had read and studied what others had thought and felt there; Goethe, Browning, Byron, Shelley; and unconsciously I had tried to feel and to think like them. (In Search of America, 136)

Certain aspects of The Yoke of Life parallel those of Alastor; indeed, as the fevered and obsessed hero Len Sterner approaches certain death, he is quoting "mostly Shelley." (The Yoke of Life, 328). The "frail and wasted" poet of Alastor seeks a mate who is "like the voice of his own soul"; Len has realized that "to have full life, I must find my other half" (Ibid., 336); a journey by water through the wilderness brings both the poet and Len to their deaths.

At first, in Grove's story, the bushland where Len's step-father struggles to keep the family alive is a trap for the school-boy Len which repeatedly prevents him from pursuing his quest for knowledge. "The hostility -- or should we say merely the indifference? -- of nature toward man," writes Pacey, "is a powerful factor in Len's frustration" (Frederick Philip Grove, 59). First a wild hailstorm destroys the crop; then the team of horses becomes enmired in the swamp; one of the animals might escape by stepping upon and crushing the body of the other, a symbolic suggestion perhaps of how Len, too, might escape. Finally, both expiring horses are devoured by the wolves. "The effectiveness of the scene," Pacey adds, "is enhanced by its symbolic overtones; to Grove the world is a kind of slough from which we vainly struggle to escape, often at the expense of another's agony" (Ibid., 60).

Presently, as with Hardy's *Jude*, the sex instinct interrupts the seeking for knowledge. Once more, Grove's story appears to be autobiographical. "For weeks," he tells of his own adolescent love affair, "I neglected my work, tormented by questions" (In Search of Myself, 138). Eventually both Len and his beloved, Lydia, reach the demonic city; here the idealistic Len becomes fever-ridden by a tubercular body and obsessed by his spiritual dilemma; the pure maiden Lydia, who was an Eve in the country, becomes a harlot in the city.

Back in the countryside, Len's former mentor and teacher points out, in Rousseauistic fashion, the superficial values of wilderness life:

There's only one state of society in which you can do without slaves; where all men are free because they live in voluntary poverty and simplicity. And that you find in the wilderness only.

The wilderness, Len said in order to break the silence that fell. That is where I am going. (The Yoke of Life, 321)

Ironically, the old man has suggested with the words "voluntary poverty and simplicity" the search for soul in nature in which Len is about to engage. Presently the two obsessed young people, Len and Lydia, set out on that search; they reach the great lake which Len has longed to see since childhood, and now the allegorical meanings become numerous and obvious:

There was a touch of wistfulness and sadness about them; as of a foreboding that they were shortly going to be driven out from the garden of Eden.... The landscape had the grandeur of death. Widely-flung ledges of limestone formed a giant's stairway of terraces, low cliff looming above cliff as if indicating successive shore-lines of the lake....

But the most curious feature consisted in the topmost layer of each of these terraces which ascended like so many steps to a height of perhaps a hundred feet above the lake. In each and every case, this top layer was broken up into circular plate-like fragments, a foot or a foot and a half in diameter, resembling the half of a cymbal....

As the veering wind sprang to the northwest, these plates of rock began to move, first desultorily, then in unison, in a tilting, rolling motion, their edges striking the smooth and hard surface of the layer below with a sharp rapping sound which trailed off into a grinding noise as the contact ran around the circumference.... (Ibid., 331)

In this land of death, Len's eyes are "hollow and cavernous."

Under a lowering, ominous sky, together the young couple harkens to a kind of death-dirge:

Thus, under a grey and dismal sky, they listened to that eery music of the rock which sounded like the chattering of teeth, but of teeth set in a death's-head without flesh or skin; it was like the insane laughter of the grim reaper himself. (Ibid., 332)

They light a symbolic fire, "a huge pyre which, for awhile, illumined the whole hollow of the beach." We may wonder if here Grove envisions as evanescent that "world within the world," the human core or self. As the young pair watches, "the fire consuming itself till there was nothing left but the darkly glowing embers," we recall his words of doubt: "death may well not be the cessation of anything whatever" (In Search of Myself, 452). In the novel he continues, "Even that dark-red glow blackened at last" (The Yoke of Life, 332).

For a short time, like two souls suspended in purgatory,

Len and Lydia live on:

To them, life had become a dream, hardly understood.... It was not till, after many hours of reclining in mossy hollows, protected from the wind, they noticed that the westering sun assumed the golden radiance of evening, that they seemed to awake to another life.... (Ibid., 343)

Though now Lydia has explained and repented and been forgiven, under the hypnotic influence of Len's obsession she, too, knows that for her death, with the hope of eternity, is the only possible expectation. The noise of the wind and the wild music of the chattering rocks accompany them to a point where a rainbow plays; with "the ghost of a smile" and hypnotized into an ecstasy beyond that of a mere human union, they go to their watery grave (Ibid., 353).

Here is use of nature, especially of the weird music of the chattering rocks, to suggest symbolically the tortured soul of Len; here is also archetypal involvement of water for purposes of spiritual rebirth; this kind of association with water has been traced back by Jessie Weston to rites acknowledging the power of waters to bring restorative life to earth.⁸

Another kind of symbolic journeying into nature, this time in the more southerly and wide-open prairie region of the west, occurs at the conclusion of Our Daily Bread. Like the wanderings of his decaying mind are John Elliot's sorties from point to point to visit his scattered children; the journeys also symbolize the often-futile attempts of the human heart, in its spiritual aloneness, to reach out to others for warmth and sympathy and love. At last comes the final journey of old John Elliot, a character study, by the way, generally acclaimed by the critics as Grove's finest. This time not even reluctant children shelter old John; the soul, rejecting humanity and being rejected by it, seeks desperately and all alone to find a home for itself. Vainly has John Elliot procreated a large family which, as flesh of his flesh, will keep alive,

so he believes, something of his own personality when he himself is gone; here Grove seems to suggest that the self cannot thus perpetuate itself, for Elliot's children have all become strangers to him. We shall see in the next chapter that the old home, which he finally reaches, is, like the house of his spirit, rapidly falling into decay, a tragic commentary, perhaps, on Grove's conclusions about the ultimate fate of the human heart and soul.

As a final note in this brief tracing of the search for and discovery of the self as illuminated by nature in relation to man, it is of interest to note that Grove has found, in southern Manitoba, a group of people who, he feels, have developed a distinct flavor of their very own because of their environment:

Such as live here, brought by those accidents of choice which commonly determine location in a new country.... If they have lived here for some time, a decade or longer, and have stayed on in the face of all the inevitable and unforeseen discouragements and difficulties, so that the landscape has had time to enforce in them a reaction to its own character, they seem slow, deliberate, earthbound. In their features lingers something wistful; in their speech, something hesitating, groping, almost deprecatory and apologetic; in their silence, something almost eloquent. (Fruits of the Earth, 164)

III

THE GENERATION OF MAN: HISTORY, SOCIETY AND THE SELF

Proceeding next, in accordance with the plan set forth in the introductory chapter of this thesis, to a survey of Grove's study of the self in relation to man, we find that in his novels the whole or integrated human being is confronted by three conflicts and that each of these is a product of change and development and of the wearing of time. The first of these conflicts is between the individual and society; it is a conflict in which the young man, cast adrift in a strange new world, finds himself to be spiritually as well as literally an alien. Quite naturally, it forms the theme of Grove's first "written" book. (In its earliest form, A Search for America poured from his pen in 1893; it was not published until 1927.)

Next, as Grove's writing skill and perceptiveness develop, he tackles the problem of the conflict within the individual himself, the conflict between head and heart, between what is spoken of as "best self" and "animal existence," this being sometimes in turn a product of sexual drive in conflict with conventional morality.

In the third place, Grove concerns himself with man's self in relation to time and specifically with the conflict between fathers and sons, between the generations of man. To this theme he devoted much of the writing time of his mature years.

First, then, we shall look at his attempts to find a spiritual home for the self, in the alien society of the new world

as it is depicted in A Search for America. Explicitly, in the words of the young immigrant Phil Branden, Grove has announced early in his writing career that his quest in this new world of America is to be of the spirit. Literally and spiritually he sees himself as a Dantean or Tennysonian Ulysses searching the western hemisphere:

The real America was somewhere else; but where? ... I felt again as those first explorers must have felt when they began to realize that behind the fringe of coast the discoverers had found there lay a vast continent, a world unknown. Somehow I felt as if my task were harder than theirs. They merely needed to set out, at the risk of their lives it is true, to arrive at the physical facts; and they found glory and reward. The unknown world which I had to explore was a spiritual world. (In Search of America, 146)

Such a quest, of course, is neither new, nor alone North American. An archetypal myth never dies, comments Fiedler; neither does an archetypal quest. We have already noted that near at hand, to influence "the quivering sensibility" of the young Grove, was the influence of the Romantic poets. "My mood was Byronic," he remarks on one occasion; like a Shelley or a Byron, he considers his predicament in this strange new world:

I had gone too far to turn back. Besides, turn back to what? To a life of mediocrity under the eye of social contempt?"

Forgotten was what had driven me out of Europe -- the merciless adherence to pre-ordained lines of caste -- the spirit of sham and hypocrisy -- the lying falseness of it all. (Ibid., 104, 134)

Grove had spent the greater part of his adolescence in Germany; like Goethe, whom he admired, and whose works, according to Fiedler, "provide a whole gallery of self-portraits,"¹ he paints in this his first novel In Search of America² a thinly-disguised portrait of his twenty-one-year-old self:

Bitterly I felt the blindness of him who gropes his way in a foreign world. Bitterly I felt the cruelty of those who live their easy lives in well-marked tracks, unconscious of the suffering that is his who is cast away among them. (A Search for America, 104)

Here are youthful suffering and search that link themselves, then, to Europe with such men as Rousseau and Goethe, and Byron and Shelley, and to America with such as Melville and Thoreau; here is the image of the lonely new-world "poète maudit" to which we have previously referred. The severing of the umbilical cord gives the young immigrant Phil Branden a strange first sense of his own individuality:

As soon as I began to face the thought of turning back, I knew that all that was impossible now. I was like one who has received a revelation. Here I was in a different world. Here I stood entirely on my own feet. Whatever I might have to go through, if finally I arrived somewhere, if I achieved something, no matter how little, it would be my own achievement; I must be I. (Ibid., 30)

Presently his experiences begin to teach him that "in order to catch the real trend of American thought, you have to get your ear down to the soil to listen" (Ibid., 101). He becomes "immensely unhappy"; he makes a first shocking discovery about the self:

What we call culture, education, breeding, is largely a matter of environment. It overlies the human nature which is common to us all and which is not an overly lovely or adorable thing. (Ibid., 56)

He wants one thing; "unless we find it, we perish spiritually and mentally." He expresses that one thing as, to "borrow a word from among the words of Jesus: to live in abundance" (Ibid., 104).

As his quest progresses, he prefaces the second part of the novel with significant words from Thoreau: "The cost of a thing is the amount of what I will call life which is required to be exchanged for it" (Ibid., 105). He fights back at the changes which the quest

is making in his personality. Sometimes, when rudely rebuffed during a search for even the most menial of employment, he falls back upon the social and intellectual pride of a European. But he recognizes, afterwards, what this means:

To entrench oneself behind the feeling of superiority is invariably a sign that one has become the underdog.... Here I was, in a new world whose sham civilization was crude, raw, unfinished in the extreme. Yes, America was crude. I can hardly convey how much there was of comfort, of soul-quieting, soothing, flattering support in this wonderful word which summarized my condemnation of the country to which I had come. (Ibid., 134)

As he goes from job to job, he senses some malevolent power in control of his life:

There seemed to be some external power which shuffled men about as you shuffle a deck of cards. I had left beaten tracks; I was in the control of some merciless gigantic machine. Useless to fight! (Ibid., 159)

He comes to realize that scientific and literary America is "parasitic" and rooted "in the millennia-old culture of Europe"; yet he suffers from the youthful passion "which longs for self-effacement" somewhere in this new world:

Had Lincoln been among the living, I should have been glad to walk across a continent to be near him, to serve him, unbeknown to himself.... His speeches I knew by heart; his features were as familiar and present to me as the reflection of my face in the glass. To him I applied what Wordsworth said of Milton. Was Lincoln an accident? Was there in America a soil from which he had grown? I had not found it. If there was, to find it should be the task of my life. (Ibid., 209)

Then, in his reading, he happens upon an account of Matthew Arnold's visit to America:

Arnold had called at the White House in Washington; and from the great height of his European "culture" had coolly broken the staff over Lincoln by calling him "crude." A horror seized me when I read that.... I remember how I got up, searched for Arnold's Essays in Criticism and threw them in the fireplace of my hotel room after

touching a match to it. By this word, by this judgment, Arnold had broken the staff, not over Lincoln, but over himself; and not only over himself, but over that whole culture medium from which he came; and quite consciously I took the word culture medium in its bacteriological sense as a name for Europe's spiritual atmosphere ... it seemed to express so well what I thought of Europe at the moment. (Ibid., 209)

This incident, Branden relates, proves a turning point in his search. It illuminates his quest, and, "in its light, my whole past and present stood condemned." Hindsight shows him that he is still the self-conscious poseur:

I thought ruefully of the fact that only a few months before, I had used Arnold's very words in condemnation of what I had seen in this New World. I am afraid there was still a good deal of spiritual pride even in this attitude. Unconsciously, I was classing myself side by side with Lincoln, as opposed to that part of America which had wounded and hurt me.... I longed to be on the hills and the plains, clad in rags, feeling at one with the clouds and the stars, with beetling mountain-cliff and hollow in the ground. (Ibid., 209)

Obviously still Shelleyan and Byronic, he now takes to the countryside to continue his quest. By this time, he has decided that in the rural areas is to be found "the ground-mass of the nation," the cities being "like strange, weird, sometimes poisonous flowers" (Ibid., 310).

Early in his years in America, Grove the writer experienced admiration for, and felt a certain kinship with, -- so he himself confesses -- the naturalist Thoreau. Obviously, with a European past of broad culture and considerable affluence, he is going to find it difficult to make that kinship a close one. But now, speaking again as Phil Branden, he takes to the countryside and again he quotes Thoreau:

No one can be an impartial or wise observer of human life but from the vantage ground of what we should call voluntary poverty. (Ibid., 318)

Penniless as was Grove himself in his first years in America, young Branden becomes an itinerant rural laborer or "hobo." Now he thinks that he is beginning to see more clearly ahead:

I still believed a solution to the problems of the world to be possible of attainment through such a process as a recasting of values -- in other words, through theories and the erection of ideals. It is also characteristic of the eternal egotism of youth that I should have felt myself to be chosen as the one to effect this revaluation of the values of life. Ideals are the playthings of immature minds. (Ibid., 342)

Gradually he reaches a position where he becomes aware that "at least nine tenths of all our behavior is unreasonable," that the ideal is not to be found, and that at best the answer is compromise, for nowhere is man's spirit completely at home:

We come indeed from hell and climb to heaven; the golden age stands at the never-attainable end of history, not at man's origins. Every step forward is bound to be a compromise; the best we can hope for is to make right prevail more and more. (Ibid., 382)

At last, with a certain sense of dismay, Branden casts his eyes around him; he has finally become aware that his search is "nonsense," for, while he himself may remain a kind of alien, the Abraham Lincolns are all about him.

A Search for America was by far the most popular of all Grove's books, its sales having reached "best seller" proportions; no doubt a good deal of this success was due to this socially-acceptable conclusion of its author. As young Branden, he has not yet learned that "Adam cannot be found outside the self."³ Branden, then, remains the naive young man who searches for the common human shadow only in the hearts of others. In Grove's second study of

adolescence and youth, The Yoke of Life, he moves to a much more intimate and profound attempt to come to terms with that self. At this point, then, we arrive at the second stage of our survey in this chapter, the conflict arising within the self as "head" struggles against "heart."

In Goethean fashion, in the guise of young Len Sterner, the protagonist of the book, again Grove paints a good deal of himself. "I wanted to know all, to grasp all that man has ever found out," he says in his autobiography (In Search of Myself, 159). Len, too, is possessed of this Faustian quality. "Since I was I," he tells Lydia, one of his wishes has been "to possess all knowledge," and he experiences a "strange exhilaration" when his teacher points out his exceptional gifts (The Yoke of Life, 298). Like Phil Branden, he too has created an ideal, but in his case it shapes itself about the girl Lydia. Where Branden seeks a mate in nature, Len comes to yearn to possess Lydia. Therein, presently, lie double discoveries that will lead to fatal conflict; Lydia reveals two personalities, the ideal of her which Len has created in his mind, and the apparently real one which becomes obvious particularly in her contact with others. As the story moves to its tragic climax, she reveals a third essential personality. And Len himself discovers to his horror that he is possessed of two distinct and opposing parts. Here again, then, is the sensitive youth, the archetype of the "alienated artist," a youth whose story is going to form a kind of composite of the roles of Werther and Don Juan and Faust.

In Faustian fashion Len surrenders his patrimony for the chance to seek knowledge, leaving his home forever "not of his own free will but driven by that force which rules our lives" (Ibid., 225), that which Pacey calls in Grove "a Greek conception of fate." Almost Len reaches his goal, to be finally and irrevocably lost to it because "some other power had taken command and hurled him out of his orbit into a different world" (Ibid., 247). Meanwhile, he has fallen in love with Lydia, or rather with his ideal picture of her. Loftily, as his illusions drop away, he forgives her and the world for being different from what he had thought them to be:

He had seen in Lydia what she was not.... He had seen certain points that belonged to a certain figure. Through them, he had drawn a figure of his own which did not coincide with the real figure; and to this imaginary figure -- a product of his mind and soul -- he had enslaved himself. He was in a white-clouded mood; the world as it was did not agree with the world as it should be; he forgave it for being what it was; but he forgave it sadly. He could not expect that things should come up to his expectations. He, being the apex of creation, looked back on its lower manifestations and saw all the previous errors; in a moral sense, he could have made a better piece of work of it. (Ibid., 222)

At this point we recall those words of Grove's already quoted: "What we need in this world is dreamers who will stop and listen into themselves" (It Needs to Be Said, 114). Len, the dreamer, now begins to listen further into himself and is horrified to discover his own duality:

It was not from the slenderness of the basis of fact on which his judgment of the world was built that the uncomfortable feeling sprang; for he remained unconscious of it. It sprang from the hidden knowledge that in his reconstruction of the past there was a fundamental flaw. He knew that, since his return from camp, he had approached Lydia not with the heights but with the depths of his being. Not the uppermost, but the nethermost strata of his essence had been the bridge between them. If guilt there was, they were equally guilty. (The Yoke of Life, 233)

This is also the author listening into himself. In his autobiography, Grove recalls how, in his adolescence, a first surge of the sex drive was awakened in him by the sight of a being clad in silk underwear, "something between an angel and a fiend," and how this surge "weighted him down with a crushing, leaden burden of guilt." Today, he adds, "it seems to me to be one of the most irrational things that can happen to a youth" (In Search of Myself, 132).

Since comparisons between The Yoke of Life and Hardy's Jude the Obscure are frequently made, it is of interest to notice at this point that Jude, too, is torn from his pursuit of knowledge by what Len calls "the curse of sex." Jude, however, suffers from no feeling of guilt. Why, he asks, should his plans have been interrupted "because of a momentary surprise by a new and transitory instinct which had nothing in it of the nature of vice?" (Jude the Obscure, 70)

Len, however, does not proceed to physical intercourse; through the city in which sex has deflected him from his search for all knowledge, he walks "inviolate." His body is frail; over him from the beginning, as with Jude and Shelley and other Romantic figures, has hung the shadow of the "decline." When the older and lecherous Joseph entices him to a whore-house, he is even then on the verge of a severe attack of pneumonia, and he flees from the building and the horror of what he sees in himself into a world of fever and delirium. Now he has visions which are undoubtedly intended to foreshadow the permanence of the obsessions which

come to rule his mind following a second severe illness; these visions involve strange symbols, a stiff derby hat into which he must break three eggs, "being careful that none of the white got into it, only the yolks," wolves that snarl upon the seemingly-pure Lydia, and the oft-repeated words, "Northern Fish company." He also envisions a journey in which he rides in a palanquin, "with elephants crowding against him right and left" (The Yoke of Life, 256). Possibly Grove, like Conrad, uses the hat to symbolize a change of personality; along with other trappings of Len's delirium, it seems to anticipate the journey into the northern wilderness and the kind of death-in-life state into which he progresses.

Physically, for a time, he recovers to the point where he can be on his feet again; fever-ridden and tubercular, he tramps the streets as a "looney." He searches for Lydia, who has become promiscuous; cursing the world and "all the facts of sex," he wants to find her and to kill her, and then perhaps kill himself. In his demented state he yells aloud, and his "inflections become ironic, Byronic, pathetic like the ravings of Lear on the heath" (Ibid., 256). Finally he finds Lydia, and "in a state of exaltation, as though the fever were on him again," he tells her of his three long-cherished wishes: "One of them to possess all knowledge. Another, to see the lake ... the third, to possess you" (Ibid., 298).

Submissively Lydia accompanies him into the northern wilderness, where at night they share a tent "divided into two compartments," and symbolically suggestive of Len's divided self.

Gradually in this wilderness, itself of course also symbolic, changes appear in both young people. These changes suggest that both have died into the spirit and that the world of the flesh has been left behind:

Len was thinking. Always, even during his recent convalescence, she had disturbed his senses; she had done so yesterday in the boat; and later on the beach. She did so no longer.... He had wanted to possess and to kill her; and perhaps to kill himself after that. This plan of his seemed inadequate now.... He tried to make clear to himself what kind of a change had come over her during the day.... She had dropped all the pretences of sex.... (Ibid., 315)

To them, life had become a dream, hardly understood... (Ibid., 343).

This book The Yoke of Life has aroused lively controversy among Grove's critics. In the introduction to this thesis, I have called attention to the fact that Pacey says of this novel that one cannot "successfully ... graft a romantic superstructure upon a realistic base," and that Len suddenly becomes "a wild Shelleyan or Byronic hero" ... whisked "to a strange unearthly lake which might have graced the pages of a novel by Mrs. Radcliffe or Monk Lewis." Here Pacey seems to have overlooked a number of points. As far as realistic exteriors are concerned, Grove has carefully paved the way for the changes that overcome Len; again and again he makes it clear that in the city he has become deranged, "gaunt, bearded, hollow-eyed ... a spectral apparition" (The Yoke of Life, 284). And the lake is no strange unearthly place; it is as Len has termed it on an early occasion "our lake," the great lake which is only a few miles from his childhood home in the bush and which

he has always wanted to see. It is, by the way, apparently a composite of that huge compound body of water comprising Lake Manitoba, near which Grove lived, and Lake Winnipegosis, whose chattering rocks Grove visited and the actual sight of which "suggested" the ending for the story.⁴ The magnificent scenery and the weird phenomenon of the chattering rocks are highlights among Manitoba's scenic attractions; Pacey admits that Grove's descriptions of these are "remarkably good" and at times "so expressive of the operation of sinister forces beyond the comprehension of man that one is almost persuaded to believe in the reality of these strange events" (Frederick Philip Grove, 62). Len's choice of this natural background is melodramatic, as melodramatic as that of those who in real life choose to end it all, say, at Niagara Falls.

Carleton Stanley also challenges Pacey's criticisms:

How does he forget that for Len Sterner the lake has always been strange and unearthly? In the very opening chapter, the lake is part of Len's dreams. Some day, when he is a man, he means to explore it. The terrible tragedy is, that of all Len's dreams, the lake alone remains.

Of Len's relationship with Lydia, Stanley continues:

It is Len's knowledge that she cannot be remade, that the past cannot be undone; that is Len's tragedy. She too knows it, and that nursing him back to life is not atonement. In his delirium she cannot communicate with him; when he wakes from delirium to trance, she tries, but cannot. Neither can she leave him, though he gives her ample opportunities to do so.... She acts as a puppet in the strange dancing of his mind.⁵

Certainly, then, this book raises the questions: Are we meant to see it as a purely realistic novel? Should we view its remarkable concluding events as symbolic or romantic? Fiedler

would undoubtedly see in it features of the gothic romance, which substitutes "terror for love as a central theme of fiction" (Love and Death in the American Novel, 115). Northrop Frye, too, might call it a romance because of its tendency to create characters "which expand into psychological archetypes," with "Jung's libido, anima and shadow reflected in the hero, heroine and villain respectively" (Anatomy of Criticism, 304). In The Yoke of Life Len and Lydia may be said to represent libido and anima, with Joseph the shadow who repeatedly leads Len to the harlots and the dark side of his own being, and from whom each time he flees in terror and loathing.

We have remarked previously that Len's story is a kind of composite of Faust and Don Juan and Werther; in other words it is a development of the gothic and romantic strains in fiction. Grove is admittedly probing something which he calls "irrational," the dark side of the self, a favorite theme of the gothic romance. Len seeks to flee "from the hideous Moor"; he tries to project his conscious guilt upon Lydia, who is also the symbol of his unconscious guilt, the ambivalent Eve without whom he cannot live. But Len, "the sorely tempted" by the sex urge, is also the Faustian seeker after all knowledge. "We thinkers," he comments, "are rebels all, offspring of Satan." He appears not to consider at all the matter of eternal damnation; his torment accompanies him into the purgatory-like state in which he exists before the actual suicide. When he has come to forgive Lydia, he says that "in God's eyes, you are my wife." But only she wishes to possess memories that will

last "for all eternity." Len's dying into the life of the spirit in the wilderness seems to be a kind of expression of Grove's own Platonic thought, that thought which undoubtedly prompted him to have inscribed over his daughter's grave:

She is a portion of the loveliness
Which once she made more lovely.⁶

While The Yoke of Life then is kin to the romance-type of fiction, it is to Grove an expression of his oft-repeated statements about the "inexorable quality" of human life, that there is not, never has been, a perfect human being, and that human life does not change, but "is the same today as it was at the dawn of history." Len Sterner echoes something of this thought when he says that man's self "is eternally the same," and that self is, moreover, something for which he is in no way responsible. "We are we," he tells Lydia. "We cannot help ourselves" (The Yoke of Life, 347). Possibly this attitude of Grove's reflects another aspect of Hamsun's influence upon him. For a similar kind of fatalistic attitude about the shortcomings of human beings is to be found in Growth of the Soil. Blandly Isak excuses his wife's adultery. "I've not been all as I ought," she confesses to him. "Naught to cry about, my dear," he soothes her. "There's none of us can be as we ought" (Growth of the Soil, 332).

The matter of Len's suicide must lead us back once more to the romantic tradition, and to the influence upon Grove of Goethe and Shelley. In his Study of Goethe Barker Fairley writes of the theme of The Sorrows of Werther in terms highly suggestive also of The Yoke of Life. Werther, he says,

evidences Goethe's awareness of the tragedy of being young, and without discipline, the tragedy of life unanalyzed, the tragedy of adolescence ... a state of mind which is pervasive and to which everything else is subordinate; the leading spokesman serves as a mouthpiece for it; the tragic individual is the victim of it. (Study of Goethe, 46)

And Mary Shelley writes that her youthful husband in killing the poet in Alastor by suicide was "burying that afflicted former self."⁷

Len's suicide recalls also that other young protagonist Jude, whose story in part parallels that of Len. Though both of these young men seek death by suicide, again in their motives there is a difference between them. "Jude is a pessimistic book," writes Grove. "Whereas The Yoke, whatever may be its worth, stands beyond pessimism and optimism" (In Search of Myself, 357). In a letter to Pacey, he comments further:

The meaning of that ending is, of course, that Len wants something so much⁸ that all else falls away ... that he will pay any price to get it.

Almost flippantly in The Return of the Native Hardy remarks that young Clym has reached that point in life at which "in France it is not uncustomary to commit suicide" (The Return of the Native, 222). But quite definitely Hardy's Jude invites death because the woman he loves is not worth loving, because he has been born out of time, and because the fates are conspiring against him. Hardy's characters do not suffer from Len's kind of torment, in which "the higher and the lower in him" are at war (The Yoke of Life, 164); in his dementia Len sees always the spectre of the past, the surge of his guilt, "the hideous Moor at the back of the cave"; in order to escape from it into innocence he must turn toward the only door open to him, that door which leads to death. Commending the

artistry of this book, Collin calls it "une évocation fidèle de l'adolescence."

Et ce drame de deux petites vies, celle de Leonard et de Lydia, brisées et menées rapidement à la ruine au milieu des rochers et des eaux du nord sauvage, a la grandeur et la splendeur des grands poètes dont Leonard a fait les compagnons de sa vie.⁹

"Every time I re-read this book," Stanley has said, "I am struck with its greatness, its eminence in tragic pathos."¹⁰

A similar conflict between higher and lower, between man the highly sensitive mind and man the animal, occurs in Settlers of the Marsh. Here the dual nature of man's self is also in conflict with opposing standards of morality in relation to the sex instinct. "One must find one's own moral centre," comments James Baldwin, "and move through the world hoping that this center will guide one aright" (Notes of a Native-Son, 9). In the essay entitled "Morality in the Forsyte Saga," Grove himself expresses his own views decisively. "I am a latitudinarian," he writes. In a work of art "I can accept either the most rigid conventionalism or the most absolute laxity, provided always that the treatment of the moral aspect is consistent." Of these two attitudes that aim at regulating sexual relations he continues, one is the old established Victorian convention at present on the defensive; the other is an emergent convention, at present on the offensive.... One of these two conventions places a vow above the urge of life; the other places the urge of life above the vow. (UTQ, XV, 60)

In view of Grove's divisioning on this question, it is of interest to note a recent comment on the belief of the American novelist Edith Wharton "that convention is society's codification of morality, against which the superior moral impulse of the

individual may legitimately risk asserting itself, but by which it is in turn usefully tested and altered."¹¹

In Grove's novel Settlers of the Marsh the young protagonist, Niels Lindstedt, attempts to make his own moral choice. Perhaps because of his Lutheran upbringing, he holds to the strict "Victorian" view that intercourse without marriage is sin; this becomes partly the cause of his ultimate tragedy. Like Len, he feels guilt for having lusted for a woman and he makes her his wife in an attempt to pacify his guilt. He has always loved another woman, but he dares not risk asserting this "legitimate" impulse.

The marriage, of course, cannot solve his dilemma. Passages in the novel suggest that Grove takes sides with Hardy in Jude the Obscure, attacking "middle-class" morality as basically immoral too. Bluntly the wife Clara at last makes clear to the decent blundering Niels what is the bitter truth:

You married me because you were such an innocence [sic] such a milk-sop that you could not bear the thought of having gone to bed with a woman who was not your wife. You had not the force to resist when I wanted you.... Do you know what you did when you married me? You prostituted me, if you know what that means.... When you married me, you committed a crime! (Settlers of the Marsh, 236)

Like The Yoke of Life Grove's Settlers of the Marsh falls within the stream of the gothic in a number of aspects. Following the pattern established by Goethe and Rousseau, here is again the substitution of a male mind for a female at the center of the novel. This time the story involves a pattern which is frequently also present, according to Northrop Frye, in nineteenth century fiction:

A common convention ... is the use of two heroines, one dark and one light. The dark one as a rule is passionate, haughty, plain,

foreign or Jewish and in some way associated with the undesirable or with some kind of forbidden fruit like incest. When the two are involved with the same hero, the plot usually has to get rid of the dark one or make her into a sister, if the story is to end happily. (The Anatomy of Criticism, 101)

And Fiedler comments on the conflict, in the American gothic, between pure blonde virgin and dark-eyed temptress:

All through the history of our novel, there had appeared side by side with the Fair Maiden, the Dark Lady -- sinister embodiment of the sexuality denied the snow maiden.... woman is bifurcated into Fair Virgin and Dark Lady, the glorious phantom at the mouth of the cave, and the hideous Moor who lurks within. (Love and Death in the American Novel, 279)

From afar the shy giant Niels worships the seemingly cold blonde Ellen, but he is seduced by the flashing-eyed older woman Clara, in circumstances similar to the seduction of the author as described in his autobiography (In Search of Myself, 138). Here is again the Judao-Christian role of the female as Eve, the temptress-seductress; here is again head victimized by heart.

Entrapped by his "Victorian" or "middle-class" morality, Niels cannot bring himself to set aside the marriage vow; thus he must continue to live with the "sinister embodiment" of his sexuality. That intellectual man cannot continue to exist with this alone becomes obvious in the symbolic changes which take place in the appearances of Niels and Clara; she reveals hideous signs of aging:

Not only the colour of her hair was artificial, but the colour of her face as well.... Always, in the morning, her lips had looked pallid; now he noticed a greyish, yellowish complexion in her face. (Settlers of the Marsn, 202)

And in Niels, in whose self the awful conflict rages, the result is devastating:

His shoulders stooped; his features began to sag. He never shaved any longer, his hair hung low. He felt old, tremendously old, centuries old....

Niels had been young, strong, enormously strong, handsome, clean, competent ... yes, and good! Bobby had seen him decaying, slowly, steadily, irrevocably. (Ibid., 266, 293)

Ultimately, for Niels, the only way out of his dilemma is murder of the temptress, who, like Lydia, has been promiscuous. He serves time in gaol for manslaughter, is eventually pardoned, and returns to marry the woman whose complexion is still "that pure, Scandinavian white" and back of those features lies hidden "the unfulfilled uncompromising dream of a virgin child" (Ibid., 330).

This book was violently attacked following its publication, which became, says Grove, "a public scandal":

Libraries barred it ... reviewers called it filthy ... Lorne Pierce nearly lost his job over it; people who had been ready to lionize me cut me dead in the street. (In Search of Myself, 381)

All this, adds Grove, in spite of the fact that "the book vibrated with the horror at the abuse of a natural instinct which converted desire into lust."

Pacey, of course, points out that the criticism was wrongly aimed; the book, he comments, "is an exposé of eroticism." His own charges against it, that some of the events border on melodrama and that the characters do not always behave credibly, are similar to those which he makes against The Yoke of Life and can be answered in like fashion. Here again we have a study of the self in the mode of the gothic romance; here again we have "psychological archetypes."

(Pacey does find in the book "depths of psychology seldom sounded in fiction" [Frederick Philip Grove, 42]). Here again is a kind of symbolic realism similar, for instance, to that in Conrad's Victory. In fact, Collin finds the dialogue in Grove's books to be sometimes surrealist rather than realistic:

Le conflit entre Niels et Clara n'est pas seulement une lutte entre mari et femme; c'est l'éternel conflit entre la ville et la campagne. Dans ce combat mortel, le dialogue n'est past réaliste, mais surréaliste, c'est-à-dire réel dans le sens ou les paroles de Richard II le sont, ou encore celles que prononce Phèdre dans sa magnifique fureur. Mais si nous avons entendu leurs paroles, comme Grove le dit du laboureur dans la prairie, eh bien, nous saurions qu'elles sont tirées de la vérité qui est en eux.¹²

Pacey goes on himself to answer his charges against the behaviour of characters in Settlers in the Marsh:

He [Grove] is in conscious reaction against the secure eighteenth-century view of human nature as completely self-responsible and self-coherent.... To him, each person is a pulsing center of uncontrolled and virtually uncontrollable energy of whom the most we can assert with confidence is that he exists and will react strongly to his environment. In this respect he reminds us somewhat of D. H. Lawrence.... For in Grove as in Lawrence, each psyche is a mystery not only to others but to itself. We are what we are, and reason as we may, we can be essentially no other. (Frederick Philip Grove, 44)

Certain sentences which Pacey quotes from the novel illustrate what Grove has said before, "that nine-tenths of all our behaviour is unreasonable," and that Len is "driven by the force which rules our lives," with some other power having "taken command and hurled him out of his orbit."

His doom, we read of Niels, had overtaken him, irrevocably, irremediably. Elsewhere we are told: Life had him in its grip and played with him; the vastness of the spaces looked calmly on. And again: He was a leaf borne along in the wind, a prey to things beyond his control, a fragment swept away by torrents. (Ibid., 44)

Pacey also points out that Grove sometimes suggests that "these controlling forces are not outside us but deeply and obscurely rooted within us":

It was very clear now, he writes, [of Niels] that the torrent which swept him away, the wind that bore him whither it listed came from his innermost self.... Are there in us unsounded depths of which we do not know ourselves? Can things outside us sway us in such a way as to change our very nature? Are we we? Or are we mere products of circumstance? (Ibid., 44)

Again and again Grove answers this question himself with but one response. Man may be pushed about by forces beyond his control, but he himself does not change. He must listen into himself, to understand that "human life is the same as it was at the dawn of history."

In its concluding pages Settlers of the Marsh breaks faith, in flagrant manner, with this dearly-held tenet of Grove's creed. If human beings cannot change, then Niels cannot rid himself of the dark shadow. He may marry the "glorious phantom" Ellen, but she will remain a phantom; the "hideous Moor" will always lurk within him. Artistically, then, the story should have ended with the murder of Clara. "To have greatly longed for purity and to be sullied," that, says Grove, is tragic (It Needs to Be Said, 87); that is precisely the tragedy of both Len and Niels.

Next we move to consider the third stage of this survey of the self in Grove's novels, namely, that involving conflict between generations of the same family:

The eternal conflict between parents and children results always in some sort of tragedy. If the children are vitally stronger, the tragedy is that of the parents; if the parents are vitally stronger, the tragedy is that of the children. (Ibid., 125)

Again Grove can write of this conflict with telling insight; he himself, from the time of his birth until the death, during his adolescence, of both his parents, was involved in a bitter Oedipal triangle. His father was past fifty when he was born, the eighth child and first male produced by a marriage that had at this time reached a point of considerable strain. In his autobiography he tells how from his infancy he accompanied his mother when she went off on frequent pleasure jaunts. These she was able to undertake because her father, a Scottish judge, had secured her fortune to her separately from the husband whom he distrusted, apparently with justification, as a spendthrift. The father sometimes treated the boy brutally and his jealousy of him was enhanced when his wife finally used the lad's illness as an excuse to quit him forever. As the young Philip grew into a presentable male escort, his mother encouraged him in his role and made him vow that he "would never marry."

Strange to say, she kept warning me against women. In women, she saw the great danger to men; in men, to women. And I being still at the stage when boys have little but contempt for girls, readily fell in with her plans as she painted for me her ideal of a happy old age for herself; she would be living with me, directing my household, ceasing to do so only with death.... Women, she said one day, make a man weak. (In Search of Myself, 94)

On his part, apparently the boy became very jealous when his mother suggested to him that, in order to repair her dwindling fortune, she divorce his father and marry again.

An echo of this tragic family situation occurs in every one of Grove's novels. It colors his attitude toward sex; it accounts for his tendency to place the "guilt" of sex upon the

females, to foist them into minor roles, or to cause them to follow parallel paths instead of the same road as their mates; it enables him to write poignantly first of the disinherited or displaced son, and then, as maturity brought him a growing sense of what must have been his father's suffering and of his own guilt, of the isolated and misunderstood father.

What is the self? John Elliot ponders in that book Our Daily Bread, which is generally accorded to be Grove's most successful study of the aging unhappy father. What qualities of himself will have been passed on to his children to ensure a continuous family pattern?

A strange new knowledge had come to him. As they grew up, these children were less and less a continuation of himself; less and less even of a blending of the parent natures. In each of them a third thing had appeared, their individual being, with inclinations and desires which seemed to be without a derivation from himself or his wife; and the strangest thing about it was that these new individual natures differed in each single one of his children. Whence were they?... He had always felt himself to be continuous with his ancestors.

With anxiety and sinister forebodings he began to see a break in that continuity. (Our Daily Bread, 12)

The book also introduces another of Grove's several-times-repeated charges against nature, namely, that nature introduces sex to the adolescent before he or she has the mental maturity to cope with it -- this of course being another phase of his concern with the conflict between man the animal and man the intellectual. In this novel he seems to imply that parents have accordingly a duty here to guide their children. Mrs. Elliot reminds her unhappy daughter that she herself wanted desperately to marry the now-undesirable husband. The girl answers:

But who was I? A silly girl. You let me! My own people let me walk into a snare. (Ibid., 28)

Soon the mother, deranged by illness and herself tormented by the question of guilt and sexual passion, dies in circumstances similar to those surrounding the death of Grove's mother. Her daughter Gladys reports something of the mental torture of her last days:

Oh, she cried, I don't even know any longer whether there's a God or not. If there is, I don't care. Come here, listen. I want to whisper to you. You may think I've had so many children because I was fond of them. No! They just came. Because I lived an evil life with your father. Look at me! And she suddenly bared her body: a terrible sight!

Another time she said, Gladys, I am the harlot of Babylon! And she wailed and cried, half, I believe, from pain; half from despair. She always talked of the despair she was in. There is nothing left to me but despair! Despair! (Ibid., 133)

Her heartrending cry of anguish is the cry of thinking womanhood who too is equally aware of the dual nature of the human being, the cry of the soul in the disease-stricken body that can only ask, Why? Why? -- the cry that justifies Grove's repeatedly-affirmed conclusion that human life on this earth is tragic.

Following his wife's death, John Elliot watches the dispersal of his family and becomes daily more aware that "between the older and the younger generations there lay an abyss." He has been patriarchal in his view of family, believing "that his sons and daughters-in-law should have been picked by himself." Now, even those of his very flesh begin to turn from him:

Young people, John Elliot said angrily, won't listen these days. We used to do as our fathers did before us. We profited from their experience. But today! All lessons are lost on them. (Ibid., 77, 250)

As misunderstandings grow, they breed fresh misunderstandings.

The old man's tragedy becomes overwhelming:

Such a longing burst in upon him that he sat on his plow while the tears ran down his snow-white beard.... If only they had remained children! If only he still were their father from whom they expected all good and all evil! (Ibid., 253)

His mind begins to deteriorate, and he experiences sometimes that feeling of struggling against unconsciousness that is the lot of a patient fighting an anaesthetic:

A great fear invades the patient; when he feels that he has lost control, when he is 'slipping over', the fear that now they will be able to do with him as they please.... Thus did John Elliot resist as he sank into sleep. (Ibid., 282)

The struggle against the overpowering will of his children becomes a symbolic struggle, the struggle of the human self against "all-destroying time." Still he craves also with deeply-human need for the love of those estranged children:

No matter how John received him, no matter what follies he was going to see, he would not say a word. He would not quarrel. He wanted a child of his simply to open his arms for him, to enfold him in love, as a mother enfolds her child. He wanted a refuge to rest from life. (Ibid., 305)

As his deterioration progresses, he begins to experience a curious detachment:

Between him and this life of his children a sudden distance seemed to have intervened; he looked at their doings as he might have looked at far-away hills veiled in purple hazes.... He watched these glances, nods and gestures with a curiosity unalloyed by resentment. They seemed to imply that he had greatly aged; that he was hardly any longer quite human. (Ibid., 315)

Soon he will die. But what is death? What is this mysterious state into which all must pass? Yearning to learn from another's experience, he watches his dying son-in-law:

He stared at the man who lay motionless as if, by some transference of mental vision, he himself might be able to steal a look into that

beyond, whatever it might be, into which the other was preceding him.... On the other side of that door, whether as persons or not, were his wife and his own father and mother; and their parents; and all those ancestors of his whose blood he had in his veins and whose blood he had, in varying proportions, transmitted to his children. And there, too, was what would perhaps explain the unexplained and inexplicable mysteries of this seemingly senseless life into which we drift like birds of passage passing over some strange land. (Ibid., 343)

Now he is living, as it were, in three periods of time, groping toward the future, existing in the present, when his children ignore him or treat him like a child, and groping back to re-create the past:

He soon found himself in a curious position which sometimes angered but mostly delighted him. This position was that of a masked or invisible spectator and listener who laughed or frowned at what he heard or saw ... he was treated like a child that is presumed not to understand what grown-up people talk about among themselves.... When, at such times, somebody suddenly spoke to him, out of that world which to others was the real world but which to him was much less real and important than the world of his phantoms, he found it very hard to extricate himself from the latter and to focus his attention on the former. (Ibid., 352)

We have already noted that the old man's final journey to his original homestead symbolizes the journey of the self or soul, the seeking of the soul to find a last resting place for itself. The old home already falling in ruins represents, like that decayed house of "Gerontion," not only the physically aged body but perhaps the disintegrating self or spirit. Like Eliot's symbolic old man "in a draughty house/ Under a windy knob," John Elliot's now-fragile self still represents those "worlds within the world" which may hide the answers to what is the meaning, the outcome and the residue of life. Grove's responses, like Eliot's, must remain ambiguous, and perhaps contradictory. John Elliot's children go their separate ways; this dispersal suggests that the self cannot hope to perpetuate itself within the progeny of its flesh; yet even though now the bodily

manifestation of the tottering Elliot resembles that of a centenarian, he looks also like the stubbornly eternal spirit of man, "like Ahasuerus who could not die" (Ibid., 386).

"Lear of the Prairie" would have been the title of this book, comments Grove, had it not been that Turgenev had anticipated him. His A King Lear of the Steppe is, of course, a much closer parallel to the Shakespeare story, and Turgenev compresses into a much shorter and more dramatic work a tragedy evoking pity and terror. On the other hand, Grove's story with its longer distances and its involved journeyings stresses in its symbolism the usually-slow processes of disintegration that are less violent but equally tragic.

Again, in the novel Fruits of the Earth, Grove returns to the theme of the conflict between the generations, between parents and children. Again the decay of the house symbolizes the matching decline of the human counterpart, both of body and mind, flesh and psyche. And again the central figure Abe Spalding ponders, What is the self? the soul? What becomes of the spirit of man?

What should the human heart, the human self, strive for? So Abe asks of his serious-minded brother-in-law, Dr. Vanbruik. The doctor answers:

Courage and fortitude, the search after truth ... that which we feel to be in harmony with the best and deepest within us.... (Fruits of the Earth, 178)

But when Abe puts the further question where is the spirit of his dead child, the doctor can find no answer. This in spite of the fact that the boy had seemed to be Abe's self "re-arisen, finer, slenderer, more delicate, more exquisitely tempered" (Ibid., 106).

Abe, too, sees the sex instinct as, if not a curse, at least a piece of trickery:

because nature plays human beings a scurvy trick in allowing a blind instinct to mature before thought and insight are sufficiently developed to act as a check. It was he, the father, who must counterbalance it. (Ibid., 237)

Even closer in theme to Our Daily Bread is that novel of Grove's later years The Master of the Mill. Because the mind of the decaying central figure gropes backward, forward and in the present, struggling to trace the conflicts of three generations, the novel is a much more ambitious and complex attempt than is Our Daily Bread to come to terms with the self. While the sense of the eternal spirit of man living on through the generations pervades the book, at the same time Grove introduces here a terrifying new element. Because his main thesis in it is that man has become the tool of the machine, the third generation dies without issue.

Here we have again various aspects of the family-triangle theme, complicated in this book by the presence of the three generations. For instance, the wife of the central figure Sam is named Maud; when she dies, every one expects that he will marry his capable and attractive executive assistant, who is also named Maud. Instead, she becomes the mistress of his son Edmund, who presently takes a wife also named Maud. When Edmund is killed, this third Maud remains to take care of the aging Sam; obviously the old man is often unaware whether this woman is his own wife or the wife of his dead son. In the figure Maud, then, is incorporated a kind of universal and eternal female principle; this third Maud survives him to inherit the great mill, presumably

symbolizing the Eve who will have to contend with the monster Mephistopheles, the Satanic mill. Dimly she is conscious of her spiritual role:

The last emotion evoked by this man was one of tenderness only; she knew that she was not the Maud to whom the name was addressed but she formed part of her; the word was addressed to a composite figure in which the first Maud has the greatest share. She herself was but a last incarnation of some ideal he had cherished, imperfect as she felt that incarnation to be. (The Master of the Mill, 326)

Sam is also keenly aware of the inevitability of conflict between the generations:

It is the father's lot, I suppose, to be tried, judged and condemned by his son. The younger generation never sees all the facts. (Ibid., 218)

Here is an echo of Nikolai's words in Turgenev's Fathers and Sons, in the title of which, Grove says, the Russian had anticipated him in the naming of his own novel Two Generations:

I did so hope to get on to such intimate terms with Arkady, and it turns out I'm left behind, and he has gone forward and we can't understand one another.... I thought I was doing everything to keep up with the times.... I read, I study, I try in every way to keep abreast of the requirements of the day -- and they say my day's over. And, brother, I begin to think it is. (Fathers and Sons, 77)

This latter novel Two Generations is, by Grove's own admission, a partial family portrait. The giant autocrat, Ralph Patterson, is the father whom he hated; the rebellious son, to whom he gives one of his own names, Phil, is of course himself. The wife, Di, acts as mediator between them:

You are both stubborn. You are both blind. You are both suspecting each other of every iniquity, of every possible form of ill-will towards each other. You think him a rebel; he thinks you a tyrant. (Two Generations, 190)

Grove has learned now that in Canada a writer dare not be too outspoken; over the relationship between Phil and his sister Alice there hangs the shadow of incest; only delicately is it hinted at, though on one occasion it is suggested even by the mother:

This time you have arrayed yourself against two of your children who are one in heart and soul. They have furthered each other in thought, maturity, judgment. (Ibid., 190)

Repeatedly the rebellious pair make a symbolic flight to Sleepy Hollow, a kind of return to the one womb since it is the secluded farm owned by their mother; here on one occasion Phil dares to cry unhappily to Alice. "I wish you weren't my sister." In this rural paradise which Phil would like to rename "The Heart of Silence," their routine follows a pattern of plain living and high thinking; by day they toil together in the fields and by night "in the cosmic peace" they recite poetry.

This theme leads Grove back quite naturally to the romanticism which was so great an influence of his own youth; as an aspect of romanticism, says Fiedler, brother-sister incest became "a challenge of the most sacred" of bourgeois taboos:

the joining of brother and sister, in however ambiguous an alliance, against the corrupt parent, became the very symbol of justified revolution. (Love and Death in the American Novel, 90)

The rebellious pair, iconoclasts by their own admission, are obviously intended to be aspects of the one psyche; their relationship is reminiscent of that of Len and Lydia living like brother-sister in the divided tent, incestuous and yet not incestuous, male and female aspects of the divided self. But in this novel Two Generations the problem is not probed in depth.

In the matter of the conflict between the generations, Di of this book and Ruth Spalding in Fruits of the Earth represent women in the role of mediator helping to preserve to eternity the spirit of man; this role Collin points out in his essay:

Dans le plan patriarcal, la tâche de la mère est d'unir le passé à l'avenir; d'aider le futur à naître. Alors pourquoi une mère doit-elle continuer à vivre après avoir donné naissance aux enfants du héros? Si le père et l'enfant étaient toujours d'accord, dit Grove, la mère aurait peu de raison de vivre. Le conflit entre le père et les enfants est la justification de l'existence de la mère.¹³

At the same time, Collin calls attention to the fact that in Grove's marriages there is no true matrimonial union but "une relation de vies parallèles."

Perhaps because of his desperate economic situation, in Two Generations Grove again breaks faith with a tenet in his artist's creed, that life is tragic and that the happy ending is wrong. In the book he briefly touches upon certain other parts of his philosophy, that "we do what we must," for instance, and that the evidence is doubtful that there is "an abiding substratum" within the self:

We don't know what we are; others do. If the effect of our life on others is the criterion, then what we do is more important than what we are. Our real life is the life of a phantom. (Two Generations, 241)

These words lead us back to Grove's pronouncement on the writer's art in which he rejects the Byronic ego and seeks to speak from the point of view of a world-consciousness. His concluding words in his autobiography reflect his personal conclusion as to the nature of the human self:

I have often doubted whether there is anything that I can legitimately call "I." I have also doubted whether any so-called personality can be considered as an end in itself; for better or worse, our lives are part of the life of mankind. Willy-nilly we live for a while under the illusion that the link in the chain has as much reality as the chain itself. Death destroys that illusion; and death may well not be the cessation of anything whatever. We live as much in others as we live in ourselves. For the chain of the generations, the life we live for others, in others, is the one thing which has any importance whatever. If we consider our indirect influence, it may extend through eternity. (In Search of Myself, 452)

Dans l'unité de toute vie," Collin writes, "l'individualité, comme dit Grove, est la contradiction tragique."¹⁴ In the struggle of the self to establish its identity against the eternal flux of time lies a conflict that is basic to Grove's artistry.

IV

THE SELF AS ARTIST

The aim of the artist, Grove writes, is "not to distract the hearer from himself, but to lead him into the very recesses of his dormant soul" (It Needs to Be Said, 39). In this process of inducing the human being to understand and to reveal his buried self, Grove as artist-novelist is confronted with limitations that are "exterior," that is to say having to do largely with his external environment, and "interior," that is, relating to the measure of his capability and the degree of his own integrity.

In the matter of invading the "wilderness" of self within the physical wilderness of western Canada, Grove felt himself to be particularly fitted. Early in life his sense of dedication to the task of writing began to be shaped; in Siberia at a critically emotional point in his career -- he had just received at Omsk a subpoena summoning him to appear before a court as co-respondent in the suit for divorce brought by Dr. Broegler against his wife -- he listened to that "vast, melancholy utterance," the droning song of the Kirghiz herdsmen:

No doubt each single one of them felt himself to be an individual.... But their song was eternal because, out of the stream and succession of generations, somewhere, sometime, a nameless individual had arisen to give them a voice. That voice was the important thing to me; for already I felt that one day I, too, was to be a voice; and I, too, was perfectly willing to remain nameless. (In Search of Myself, 154)

Presently he determined to be the voice of those pioneers of the Canadian west with whom he came to feel a kinship of spirit:

Canada has never, so far, entirely severed the umbilical cord which bound it to England. To the European I still was, it somehow seemed less alien than the United States. Further, my own final interests had come to define themselves as bound up with pioneering conditions which, in Canada, existed in a purer culture, as it were, than in the country to the south.

In Canada ... I had come across old men and women there, in my endless tramps, who were bending over dog-eared and frayed copies of the Bible and other cherished books, painstakingly spelling out, with muttering lip, and the finger following the line, words and sentences which expressed what they felt.... these west-Canadian pioneers and the Siberians were alike; and they were one with myself.... (Ibid., 218)

A part of the qualifications for the task that he was going to undertake came, he felt, from his years of work as a western farm hand:

At a glance I could survey the prairie country from Kansas to Saskatchewan or Alberta; and at a thought I could evaluate, in my own way, of course, the implications of pioneer life. I the cosmopolitan had fitted myself to be the spokesman of a race -- not necessarily a race in the ethnographic sense.... These people, the pioneers, reaffirmed me in my conception of what often takes the form of a tragic experience; the age-old conflict between human desire and the stubborn resistance of nature. No matter where I looked, then as today, I failed to see that the task of recording that struggle of man with nature had ever adequately been done, not even by Hamsun, who, for the sake of a pleasant ending, gave to Isaak, Geissler. To record that struggle seemed to be my task. (Ibid., 227)

It is of interest to note here that McCourt points out that in none of Grove's western Canadian novels is this avowed purpose to record the age-old conflict between human desire and the stubborn resistance of nature the real centre of interest (The Canadian West in Fiction, 58). The immediate conflict in Our Daily Bread and Fruits of the Earth, it is true, is between the generations; this conflict appears also in his "eastern" novels Two Generations and The Master

of the Mill. But, as Collin has noted, in the larger sense in which nature is equated with the universe and the march of time, the conflict is between the individual self and the stream of the ages, between the single pulse and the eternal.

Granted that Grove possessed certain "exterior" qualifications for the task which he set for himself, as an artist in a pioneer land he faced difficulties that could prove insuperable. There is, in the first place, as Lionel Trilling shows, the lack of many externals which are an integral part of European life:

There is a famous passage in James's life of Hawthorne in which James enumerates the things that are lacking to give the American novel the thick social texture of the English novel -- no state; barely a specific national name; no sovereign; no court; no aristocracy; no church; no clergy; no army; no diplomatic service; no country gentlemen; no palaces; no castles; no manors; no old country houses; no parsonages; no thatched cottages; no ivied ruins; no cathedrals; no great universities; no political society; no sporting class - no Epsom, no Ascot! (Approaches to the Novel, 237)

While Grove sets himself, like Hardy for instance, to ferret out reality within the hearts of residents of a largely rural area where the lack of such externals as these would be less keenly felt, yet Hardy's works are enormously enriched by just such externals; even Egdon heath, "slighted and enduring," acquires a special quality because of its "ancient permanence" and its long record of conflict with the human race -- it "figures in Domesday," Hardy tells us. Grove cannot hope to claim this kind of quality, this record, for the Manitoba bush country of, say, Over Prairie Trails.

Not only does the artist in Canada suffer from these external limitations but also he finds himself hampered by the narrowness of those who should be his readers. More than once Grove himself has put

the finger upon this quality among Canadians, a quality which results in the spirit of the artist having to go unnourished:

Any nation has the literature it deserves.... Canadians are at bottom not interested in their own country. I honestly believe that they prefer to read about dukes and lords, or about the Civil War in the United States.... (UTQ, VII, 459)

Others have repeatedly uttered this cry; the prevalence still of the historical romance indicates that the condition is a continuing one. A. J. M. Smith, for instance, shows that this condition is a kind of colonialism and that it fosters "the romantic spirit":

Colonialism is a spirit that gratefully accepts a place of subordination, that looks elsewhere for its standards of excellence and is content to imitate, with a modest and timid conservatism, the products of a parent tradition.

A direct result of colonialism may be a turning away from the despised local present, not toward the mother country, but toward an exotic idealized crystallization of impossible hopes and noble dreams.... The romantic spirit is encouraged by a colonial sense of inferiority.¹

True nationalism, Smith adds, rises out of the local realism of the pioneer; formerly our poets tended "to consider the realities of the life around them as too modest or too coarse" for their attention. In the field of fiction, we have noted, to reproduce this "plain bread" of the realities of the life about him has been Grove's constant aim and for his efforts he has been acclaimed as the forerunner of realism in Canadian prose writing:

He was the first author to introduce realism ... with the publication of Over Prairie Trails in 1922 and Settlers of the Marsh in 1925. (Wild Geese appeared in 1925 and Stead's Grain in 1926) but his work goes back earlier.²

This "plain bread" of realism should include, according to E. K. Brown, both accuracy of fact and accuracy of tone; he too notes the prevalence of the romantic and the false:

Throughout our literature there has been a disposition to force the note, to make life appear nobler or gayer or more intense than Canadian life really is in its typical expressions. (Masks of Fiction, 51)

Grove in attempting to portray life exactly as he has seen it has been accused of being "unduly stark" and even of not presenting "an honest picture." But to Grove man's lot is tragic; he too is slighted and enduring; he provides sport for the gods:

I pointed out to a certain writer that in a certain book ... she had spoiled it by an illogical and psychologically faulty "happy ending." Ah, she said, the happy ending! The only class of readers we can find demands it. So, I countered, did the only class of readers which Shakespeare, Goethe, Hardy found. Their real readers they had to conquer.

What is the quality of the response mirrored in the greatest works of literature of no matter what time or clime? There can be only one answer: it is tragic.

This, the tragic quality of the response to life, is universal. Every great work of art is fundamentally an outcry against the immortals; as flies to wanton boys are we to the gods; they kill us for their sport. (It Needs to Be Said, 81, 85)

Grove's striving to give to the tone of his writing this universally tragic note which "being inherent in the very conditions of our existence on earth has not changed and cannot change" is an essential part of his efforts to report his findings from the point of view of the world consciousness. In this matter, it seems to me, he would differ strongly from E. K. Brown, who says:

In the end, however, regionalist art will fail because it stresses the superficial and the peculiar at the expense, at least, if not to the exclusion, of the fundamental and universal. (Masks of Fiction, 52)

Hardy's works, for instance, seem to provide an argument against this; as Grove remarks in his essay on Hardy, Egdon heath has become "one of the great landscapes in all art" (UTQ, I, 499).

Over Prairie Trails, a work in which, as we have noted, Grove perhaps sets out to create a kind of Egdon heath in western Canada, is already a minor Canadian classic.

This matter of artistic tone and method returns us to a specific consideration of further stumbling blocks in the path of Grove as he attempts to penetrate into "the human heart and soul." The creative spirit will, he says, "place itself and thereby the reader in the heart of things in such a way that they look on at what is happening from the inside, as if they were themselves a world-consciousness which has its ramifications in all human beings that appear on the stage of the work of literature." Moreover, this creative spirit will aim at giving "an as nearly universally valid reaction to the outside world as is possible to its own human limitations." This kind of placement, we have seen, would appear to involve Grove in direct conflict with his ambition to write "realism", the result of his method being the creation of symbols or "psychological archetypes."³ In his autobiography Grove illustrates, for example, how Abe Spalding came into being, how one day as he was driving to town with a load of grain, he saw, for the first time in that area, a human being. "Outlined as he was against a tilted and spoked sunset in the western sky," the man, who was ploughing, "looked like a giant." Grove stopped and spoke to him; he learned that the newcomer had only that day arrived from Ontario and that, having but an hour before completed a two-thousand-mile train-ride from the east, he was already ploughing his own first field. Always, after this first encounter, Grove avoided the man by taking a different route to town:

It seemed imperative that I should never see, never hear, that man again....

Already, while he was standing by the side of the trail, with me reclining on top of my load ... and more especially when he had uttered a few words, he had not seemed to me to be quite the sort of giant I had imagined when he had first topped the crest of the hill. Yet somehow he had bodied forth for me the essence of the pioneering spirit which had settled the vast western plains.... This man, a giant in body if not in mind and spirit, had furnished the physical features for a vision which had, so far, been incomplete because it had been abstract ... if I had heard him speak as no doubt he had been used to speak, without relevance to my creation, that mental vision of mine would have been profoundly disturbed. (In Search of Myself, 260)

The result of such a method of creating a personality, says McCourt, is "to see man not as an individual but as a symbol" (The Canadian West in Fiction, 65). This raises an arguable point; generally the critics list Abe Spalding among Grove's most vivid creations. In answer to McCourt, we might suggest in the first place that writers frequently tend to create characters which are a kind of synthesis, a composite possessing various qualities selected from, perhaps, a number of human beings they have encountered; in the second place, recalling Watt's classifications of realism in the novel, we have found that Grove's method of creating personality is not to see man as an individual in McCourt's sense, which is apparently that of a kind of formal realism, but to see him in the larger classical sense. There can be nothing wrong, surely, with seeing man as a symbol only; but Grove's novels and his essays suggest that he wishes to see man both as symbol and as individual.

At the same time, in a report before the Royal Society, Grove himself furnishes a naive answer of his own to those critics

who complain that the people of his fiction are symbols rather than persons; commenting on the Polish novel Reymont's The Peasants, he remarks that life in Europe as contrasted with that in America is more complex:

Peasants live in villages, not on isolated farms; people are to a greater extent individuals and what we commonly call characters; in America the uniformity of the problem of preserving life against the inexorable forces of nature entails a more widely spread uniformity of character.⁴

With this conclusion western pioneers would strongly disagree; in fact the exigencies of the pioneer situation, with its isolation and its utter dependence upon personal initiative, tend to nourish "character" and to foster individuality; pioneer districts usually bristle with human beings who might be rated as "characters."

Grove points out that in Europe the rural folk are likely to dwell in villages; herein does lie an important difference between the old world and western Canada which influences the writer himself and the people of his fiction; this difference manifests itself not only in Grove but in such other western writers as Ross and Mitchell. In the Canadian west the pioneer village of small shop-keepers sprang up to serve the more isolated rural dwellers; they set themselves up in tiny oases, clinging together against the wilderness and attempting to fence it out; they tended to admire and to fear, to ridicule and to resent, the bolder souls out on the lonely homesteads who faced hardships which they perhaps had not the courage to endure. Out of this village self-centredness, this turning inward from the wilderness, developed much of that kind of frigidity and hostility and isolation which McCormack senses in both Over

Prairie Trails and As For Me and My House. For most of his seventeen years of residence in Manitoba and during his most successful publishing period, Grove lived and suffered in such small rural communities; Ross, who may have been influenced by Grove, was likewise a prairie village dweller; McCormack notes "the absence of human sympathy" in these two books and "the terrible feeling of isolation that gives them their peculiarly chilling tone."⁵ Frankly, in the Author's Preface, Grove admits to incompatibility. "I disliked the town, the town disliked me." (In Mitchell the "village" outlook evinces itself in a tendency to caricature the rural folk.)

This village atmosphere tends also to foster in Grove (as in Mitchell) a romantic and partial view of nature. With a Byronic touch he adds in the Preface, "I love Nature more than Man"; again at a critical point in his life, as when he listened to the Kirghiz tribesmen on the bleak Siberian steppe -- so he confesses in his autobiography -- nature is holding out to him her comforting arms. As he proceeds to paint her, because he is not born of her, he will not, like Hardy, be able to mantle her with a similar warm cloak of love; for neither Grove nor Mitchell, who in the opening pages of Who Has Seen the Wind seems also to have Egdon heath in mind, will the faces of the hills smile with the "friendliness and geniality" that they do for the wild heath boy Clym.

To return to Grove's avowed purpose of exploring the inward "wilderness" of the human heart and soul, we realize that he must face even more severe limitations. An artist who sets himself such a chore, if we are to believe the words of Jung, is attempting the impossible.

In the first place, Jung seems to believe that full self-knowledge, complete awareness of the psyche, cannot be achieved:

The ego knows only its own contents, not the unconscious and its contents.... the real psychic facts are hidden like that of the physical and anatomical structure....

Our psyche, which is primarily responsible for all the historical changes wrought by the hand of man on the face of this planet, remains an insoluble puzzle and an incomprehensible wonder, an object of abiding perplexity. (The Undiscovered Self, 7, 44)

In the second place, fear of this unconscious psyche, Jung writes, is an active impediment in the path of knowledge of the self:

The devaluation of the psyche and other resistances to psychological enlightenment are based in large measure on fear -- on panic fear of the discoveries that might be made in the realm of the unconscious.... It is this fear of the unconscious psyche which not only impedes self knowledge but is the gravest obstacle to a wider understanding and knowledge of psychology. (Ibid., 49)

Yet Jung would undoubtedly applaud Grove's daring in attempting to invade the wilderness of self, for, paradoxically, study of the individual, who is but an unimportant unit in the general stream, is to Jung the only worthwhile and rewarding study:

Judged scientifically, the individual is nothing but a unit which repeats itself ad infinitum.... For understanding, on the other hand, it is just the unique individual human being who ... is the supreme and only real object of investigation. (Ibid., 11)

In the light of Jung's comments we look at Grove's burrowings into the self and we attempt to measure something of his artistic integrity, his honesty with himself. Most critical comment commends this quality in him; only one, an unsigned editorial in The Canadian Forum, calls it into question:

Yet one cannot help wondering how far his integrity merged with a self-conscious pose of integrity, how much of his frustration sprang out of an obscure and profound will to be frustrated. No one can answer such a question about oneself or about others.⁶

Yet Pacey writes glowingly about this quality of integrity in Grove:

Integrity, that is the supreme moral value to Grove, if I read his novels aright.

In Grove's life as in his work, two values stand out, unshakable steadfastness of purpose and absolute integrity of spirit. The image of the rock is inescapable. (Frederick Philip Grove, 129, 23)

He has tried, says Pacey, to write with all the honesty of which he is capable. This is a statement which I must call into question. In Nobody Knows My Name, James Baldwin has said that the writer must force from his experience the very last drop, whether bitter or sweet; elsewhere in the book, expressing the same thought more bluntly, he insists that eventually the writer must cough the whole vomit up. It may be that Grove's failure to be completely honest is partly unconscious, partly due to that fear of the unconscious which Jung tells us is a severe hindrance to self-knowledge; but it cannot be wholly so. We have noted that Grove was Byronic in his youth; perhaps he has remained Byronic to the end. Curiously enough, his most flagrant falling short in his attempts to reveal the whole self have, as in Byron's case, to do with, or arise out of, his own unhappy Oedipal situation and his youthful love affairs. No human being, he insists, is completely angel or completely villain:

We do not in life meet with heroes and villains; we are ourselves never one or the other. We are both; we are guilty and not guilty at the same time. (It Needs to Be Said, 73)

In writing his autobiography, he speaks in glowing terms of his mother; she is, by his account, in every way a splendid person, magnificent in appearance and charming in manner, a superb

musician and a kind of Madame de Staël in her drawing rooms; he cannot bear to tell that she is apparently exceedingly selfish, imperious and pleasure-loving. This reticence is understandable; he is "her darling boy." His seven sisters, all much older than he, were "my father's daughters. I was my mother's son" (In Search of Myself, 23). So deeply does he feel for his mother that he can only say of her last words to him, "To this day I cannot bear to repeat them." Yet upon his father he turns a full and glaring light of disapproval, relating incidents which illustrate his lechery, his callousness, his brutality. "Me," he comments, "he despised" (Ibid., 19).

We have already noted that this family situation colors all his novels and results in his failure to grapple whole-heartedly with the personalities of his female characters. This partial failure in integrity is conspicuous, for example, in that passage in his autobiography in which he explains that his female characters are shadowy because in the pioneer home women's role is not so vital as is that of the men (Ibid., 223). Occasionally, as in such scenes as those of Mrs. Elliot's dying hours in Our Daily Bread and the young Ellen's candid account of the sex relations between her mother and her father in Settlers of the Marsh, Grove shows flashes of insight into the female character which suggest that he is capable of honest and sympathetic treatment of womankind. That he is both aware and not aware of his shortcomings in this regard is suggested by his slighting words about Rølvaag's Giants in the Earth:

Rölvaag ... forgets what he set out to do and allows the story, from that of the settlement, to become that of the woman on the pioneer farm.⁷

Commenting on the writings of Grove's fellow-Scandinavians, Pacey notes that the resemblance between Grove and Rölvaag is even closer than that between Grove and Hamsun; it is, he says, "one not of art but of life." Though quite differently educated in the old land, in America both wrote of pioneer scenes and Pacey concedes that Giants in the Earth "is probably a greater achievement than any of Grove's novels" (Frederick Philip Grove, 133). It is, I believe, the feeling of intimacy with the problems of Per Hansa and Beret and especially the almost uncanny awareness and sensitivity in revealing the workings of Beret's mind and the painting of her slow deterioration that lend to Rölvaag's novel its superior quality.

Similarly, the matter of Grove's integrity may be raised in regard to a related problem, that of his attitude toward sex. In the stories of Len and Niels, the "guilt" of sex belongs chiefly to the women; it is no doubt true, as Grove tells it in his autobiography, that he was "seduced" at seventeen by an older woman, who became "insatiable"; yet there is no dwelling upon his own guilt. All these factors tend to limit and to impair his psychology where love and the female sex are concerned, and we are left with the feeling that he has not searched his soul with all the honesty of which he is capable. It is not, as McCourt suggests, "an almost pathological shrinking from the animal that is man" (The Canadian West in Fiction, 66); his occasional passages revealing his own youthful passionate self and his sympathetic handling of the sex

problems of Len and Niels alone contradict McCourt. But it is a shrinking from being completely honest, a shrinking from facing the whole truth, or of allowing the guilt over the circumstances of his own life to bias and to limit his treatment of women and of sex.

Finally, returning to look more broadly at the general scope of the undertakings of Grove the artist, as a result of the investigations of this thesis we have learned to understand, and perhaps to appreciate better, the kind of character Grove is attempting to create, and now it should be possible to argue that critics like Pacey and McCourt are wrong in some of their assessments of his work. We have seen that what he has accomplished is the result, not of his ineptitude, but rather of his attempt to give both realistic surface and symbolic depth to his characters, to create for them a quality of universality which at the same time tends to make them diagrammatic. Because of his concern with the tragic element of life, he has been highly praised for his integrity; however, if we look closely at his novels in the light of his major themes, it does become clear that, despite his determination to explore far into the human heart and soul, there is some shrinking from the final truth.

Whether we choose to praise or to condemn his methods of characterization, to praise or to condemn his integrity, it is certainly clear that in connection with his study of the human self he takes his place as one of the most important novelists of the twentieth century and certainly among the first if not the foremost

of the Canadian novelists. He has led Canadian fiction from bypaths of triviality and out onto broad major highways and he has helped immeasurably to define the Canadian identity.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter I:

¹Pacey, Book Review of A Passion in Rome, QQ, LXIX, 309.

²McCormack, "Recent Paperbacks," Tamarack Review VI, 99.

³"These ... are representative of what I like," said Grove of a list of selected favorite authors, Conrad among them, which he included in his essay, "The Happy Ending." It Needs to Be Said, 83.

⁴Grove, "Thomas Hardy," UTQ, I, 499.

⁵Clarke, "A Canadian Novelist and His Critic," QQ, LIII, 367.

⁶Ibid., 367.

Chapter II:

¹"in 1893, at the end of the year, I settled down to write the story of what I had lived through since August, 1892. The result was a manuscript ... which I called A Search for America." In Search of Myself, 181.

²Collin, "La Tragique Ironie de Frederick Philip Grove," Gants du Ciel, IV, 29.

³Skelton, "Frederick Philip Grove," DR, XIX, 150.

⁴Collin, "La Tragique Ironie de Frederick Philip Grove," Gants du Ciel, IV, 31.

⁵Edmund, says Pacey, is a type of Fascist overlord. Frederick Philip Grove, 88.

⁶Collin, "La Tragique Ironie de Frederick Philip Grove," Gants du Ciel, IV, 32.

⁷Ibid., 32.

⁸Weston, From Ritual to Romance. See especially Chapter II, III and IV in which Miss Weston discusses the association of revivifying water with the Grail legend and with the Tammuz and Adonis rites.

Chapter III:

¹Fiedler, Love and Death in the American Novel, 94.

²In Search of America, though first written in the year 1893, was not published until 1927.

³The content of this line was suggested to me by a reading of R. W. B. Lewis's The American Adam. He writes of the image of "the authentic American as a figure of heroic innocence and vast potentialities, poised at the start of a new history ... an image crowded with illusion ... Lewis, The American Adam, 1.

⁴Pacey, "Frederick Philip Grove: A Group of Letters," Canadian Literature, IX-XII, 32.

⁵Stanley, "Frederick Philip Grove," DR, XXV, 435.

⁶Rowe, "Here He Lies Where He Longed," Manitoba Arts Review, VI, 63.

⁷King-Hale, Shelley, 62.

⁸Pacey, "Frederick Philip Grove: A Group of Letters," Canadian Literature, IX-XII, 32.

⁹Collin, "La Tragique Ironie de Frederick Philip Grove", Gants du Ciel, IV, 36.

¹⁰Stanley, "Frederick Philip Grove," DR, XXV, 436.

¹¹Baxter, "A Backward Glance by Edith Wharton," New York Times Book Review, Aug. 9, 1964, p. 4.

¹²Collin, "La Tragique Ironie de Frederick Philip Grove," Gants du Ciel, IV, 36.

¹³Ibid., 30.

¹⁴Ibid., 25.

Chapter IV:

¹Smith, "Colonialism and Nationalism in Canadian Poetry before Confederation," Report, Canadian Historical Association, 1944, 74, 75.

²Saunders, "The Grove Papers, QQ, LXX, 23.

³In Chapter I we have noted that with Grove method and attitude appear to conflict, that in his writing he insists upon the need to delve into the individual self while at the same time insisting upon the importance of creating "a world consciousness." This latter would seem to be largely symbolic.

⁴Grove, "Peasant Poetry and Fiction from Hesiod to Hémon,"
Report, Royal Society of Canada, XXXVIII, 94.

⁵McCormack, "Recent Paperbacks," Tamarack Review, VI, 99.

⁶"Canadian Dreiser," unsigned editorial, The Canadian Forum,
XXVIII, 121-122.

⁷Grove, "Peasant Poetry and Fiction from Hesiod to Hémon,"
Report, Royal Society of Canada, XXXVIII, 98.

ABBREVIATIONS

Dalhousie Review	DR
Queen's Quarterly	QQ
University of Toronto Quarterly	UTQ

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